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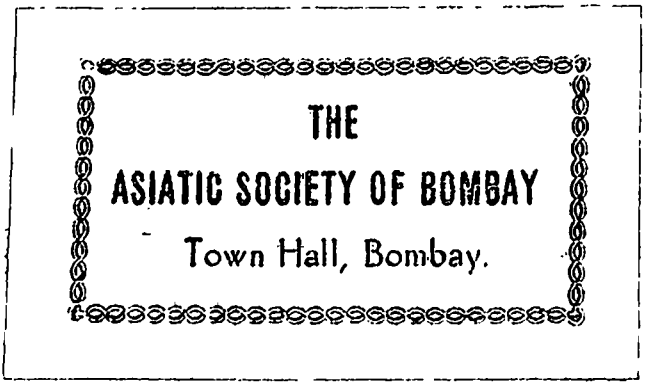

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LETTERS

FROM THE

MEDITERRANEAN;

CONTAINING A

CIVIL AND POLITICAL ACCOUNT

OF

SICILY,

B952

TRIPOLY, TUNIS, AND MALTA:

WITH

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES,

ANECDOTES AND OBSERVATIONS,

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ILLUSTRATIVE OF

THE PRESENT STATE OF THOSE COUNTRIES, AND THEIR RELATIVE SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

BY E. BLAQUIERE, ESQ.

" Fas est et etiam ab hoste doceri."—*Virgil.*

" Quiconque prefere sa propre gloire aux sentimens de l' humanité, est un monstre d'orgueil, et pas un homme."—*Fenelon.*

CS-C-5

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

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James Gillet, Printer, Crown-court, Fleet-street, London.

MOST HUMBLY DEDICATED

TO

HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

AND

THE BRITISH NATION,

BY THEIR VERY HUMBLE

AND EVER DEVOTED SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

INTRODUCTION.

HAVING at length surmounted the innumerable difficulties which are, even in this enlightened country, often opposed to the candidate for literary fame, particularly to those who assume the task of exposing political errors and moral depravity, I am induced to usher the following Letters into the world, not indeed without that degree of repugnance which should ever accompany young authors, when unsupported by former claims to public notice or private patronage; although, flattered by the assurance of several friends, I have been led to cherish a hope, that this publication may render some trifling service to the cause of truth, and to the equally important one of my country.

At a period when the art of book-making has attained such an unexampled acmé, it will doubtless appear to many, that my object in publishing these Letters is merely that of adding another to the numberless impositions daily obtruded on the British public. Those who may favour the book with a perusal, will, however, I hope, acquit me of a motive highly improper in itself as it is injurious to the interests of literature; and believe me

when I assert, that nothing but a sense of personal duty to his Majesty's government, and a strong desire of serving the nation at large, should ever have persuaded me to incur the critical censur and examination to which all those who address the public are so very properly subjected.

The peculiar circumstances under which I have written, added to a wish of more fully elucidating my general plan, render it necessary that I should detail some of the causes which gave rise to the undertaking. I had long considered the Mediterranean as one of the most interesting quarters in general to which the attention of the British government could be usefully directed; and having gone there some years ago, a close examination of several of the countries in its vicinity only served to confirm all my former opinions. It is true, that whether on the shores of Greece, Italy, or Africa, I could not help feeling sentiments of the deepest regret, in viewing regions, once the seat of art and the glory of civilization, now reduced to a state of such unparalleled degeneracy; yet those incomparable attributes of climate, soil, riches, and situation, which every where presented themselves, afforded me sources of the highest admiration: and while the ruined temple or mutilated statue seemed to remind me of fallen greatness, I felt an irresistible impulse to future inquiry, in the hope that on my return to England I should be enabled to present my country with a more faithful picture of their resources, manners, and customs, than the gene-

rality of modern tourists have hitherto had either the necessary time or inclination to delineate. How far I have succeeded in the attempt, it is left for the public to discriminate. In looking over the immense number of volumes already before that public, and professing to describe several countries bordering on the Mediterranean, I cannot deny having experienced instruction and amusement from their perusal; but I looked in vain for that species of information which is calculated to convey an adequate idea of their political and commercial resources—a knowledge absolutely necessary for any state desirous of reaping advantages from friendly alliance and amicable intercourse with other countries: besides, the new character assumed by our Mediterranean politics, after the expedition to Egypt and subsequent occupation of Malta, operated powerfully as an additional incentive to the determination I had formed.

That the unexampled state of Europe, and insatiable ambition of France, have fully justified, and even rendered necessary, the extension of our foreign acquisitions, is a fact which no one can possibly deny. Yet singular as the thing may appear, it was reserved for our enemy and rival to shew us the vital importance of the Mediterranean, and the amazing utility of maintaining a political preponderance there, which would not only check the views of other powers, but form a barrier between them and our eastern empire. History has

already recorded the intentions of Louis XIV. with respect to Egypt; and his plan of colonizing that country, cherished most warmly by his successors, was nearly executed by the present Ruler of France, had not the victorious army of Sir Ralph Abercrombie frustrated the attempt, although not without the greatest difficulty, and an immense sacrifice of blood and treasure on the part of Great Britain. Since that period, it may be said, that the Mediterranean has been completely in our own possession, and that an enviable occasion was presented to the British cabinet of consolidating our power, in such a way as not to be shaken by future events: yet I regret to say, that the cool and dispassionate observer of what has passed there since the memorable peace of Amiens, can only see fresh causes of deploring that lamentable procrastination, which, like an inevitable fatality, marks all our political measures of improvement; and it is really melancholy to reflect, that the superior diplomatic ingenuity of our enemy still continues to give him an influence which our gigantic naval and military establishments cannot obtain. The obvious necessity of developing the causes which may have led to such an extraordinary circumstance, and of pointing out proper remedies for the removal of it, are surely self-evident; and in tracing the evil to its true source, I hope to prove that it can only be by a radical change in our policy towards the countries I have described, we can ever expect to become popu-

lar amongst people whose habits, religion, and manners, are so totally in opposition to our own.

That vague and infinite theory has formed a considerable part of several political essays published lately, the experience of facts will, I think, justify me in asserting: however, without the smallest desire of depreciating the importance which the public may have attached to the opinions of other people, I merely wish to observe, that I have in no instance given way to those sanguine anticipations of the future consequence or success of untried political systems, which have so often brought individuals, as well as whole nations, into the grossest errors. This disposition has led me to the statement of facts, from which such inferences have been drawn as appeared to me the most calculated to elucidate the subject and inform the reader: equally anxious to avoid the charge of diffuseness I have in this work confined myself to the description of four countries in the immediate vicinity of each other, and which of all those in the Mediterranean, are most important to the views and interests of Great Britain. It may have indeed happened in a few instances, that through the impossibility of discovering truth, when secluded from the public eye by the enemies of our country, some inaccuracy may have crept into the work, but, ever open to conviction, I shall be invariably ready to correct errors of that sort, and controvert, when necessary, the opinions opposed to my assertions.

There is one custom peculiarly reprehensible, derogatory to the character of a great nation, and one which I cannot avoid noticing in this place. I allude to the extreme readiness with which information is generally received from persons filling subordinate situations, whose plans are often partly adopted while the individual is entirely neglected, although, if permitted to have had a share in their execution, he would doubtless have done infinitely more than what he had ever promised. The foregoing hardships are further aggravated by the recollection, that should his propositions fail in their effect through the incapacity or want of foresight in others, the whole blame is indiscriminately attributed to him, and he is left to deplore the neglect and indifference which attended his inclination to serve the public. Without entering into a recapitulation of many other facts connected with this subject, I have only to express my hopes, that the evident propriety of an administration supporting the dignity of the crown, and rendering itself popular, by paying proper attention to communications of a useful, political, or commercial nature, from whatsoever quarter it comes, will ere long excite that degree of consideration it so justly deserves: and in reforming this part of our domestic policy, an important benefit will, I am convinced, be rendered to the country.

Indeed, if there is any thing deserving praise in the French system, or an example to follow, it

is in the excitement held out by that government to the aspiring individual; this has given them a decided superiority over the other powers of Europe, not excepting ourselves: and ever since the revolution their choice of persons, whether in war or diplomacy, is truly remarkable. It is a well known fact, that no effort of a Frenchman, however humble his situation or limited his knowledge may be, is treated with indifference; on the contrary, instances have repeatedly come within my own observation, in which the ministers of Napoleon did not disdain to answer, in the most flattering terms, persons who took the trouble of addressing them on matters of public interest; and although no immediate advantage was held out to the party, he had at least the satisfaction of knowing that his assiduity was not disregarded. As frequent opportunities will occur in the course of the work of illustrating the foregoing topic, I shall leave it for the present, and proceed to notice some of the works already published upon the countries I have undertaken to describe.

Innumerable are the works both in poetry and prose, which have been written on the island of Sicily, yet those which are most worthy of attention, as compiled by natives, are altogether unknown in England; and instead of looking for the events of its history in the pages of Fazzello, Cluverio, Rocco Pirro, and a host of others, we are satisfied with wading through the laborious

extracts from Plutarch's Lives, with which Baron Stolberg and Mr. Swinburne have contrived to swell their well known volumes. Disregarding compilations put together in that way, and inquiries which were merely the result of a voyage from Messina to Palermo, and thence coast ways to Girgenti, &c., I made it my duty to search for documents amongst the literati in several parts of the island, and to consult all the books to be found, which appeared in the least calculated for my purpose; how far I have been successful, a perusal of the letters from that island will demonstrate.

The reviewers have superseded the necessity of my taking any notice of Mr. Galt's account of Sicily; although I confess, that where he has touched on the state of politics and commerce there, it does not appear that he was altogether unacquainted with his subject. Amidst writers of every class, Mr. Leckie forms a distinct subject of consideration; nothing I can say would add to his well earned fame.

Captain Pasley's Essay has acquired great celebrity, and is doubtless admirably calculated to raise the nation's hopes: how far his views with respect to the continent and his plan of making us a military nation, would add to our strength or happiness, it is for time and events to determine. But I cannot help observing, that his examination of Sicilian politics appears rather superficial when compared to many other parts of the work; and

I am satisfied that a longer stay in the island would have proved to him that its military possession is of trifling importance to England without securing the attachment of the people. In recording the late events there, I shall have occasion to allude to the "Essay on our Military Policy" again, and in taking leave of it at present, I feel much pleasure in acknowledging that its perusal afforded me the greatest source of amusement; the nation at large know how to appreciate the merits of a writer, who, like Captain Pasley, has awakened in us a proper sense of our strength and resources.

With respect to the Regency of Tripoly, a country of considerable extent and great resources, I have not been enabled to discover a single line either in manuscript or print calculated to throw the smallest light on its real situation; and with the exception of what is met with in books of modern geography, or Mr. D'Anville's work, we are totally in the dark. As to any political or commercial advantages to be derived from a closer intimacy with the people and government, I have endeavoured to make up for such a dearth of information by the most assiduous personal inquiry, and by a great variety of verbal communications collected from persons who had resided there for many years; so that if even the details are less minute and extensive than those of Tunis, I can at least vouch for their strict veracity.

Upon the Regency of Tunis, several works have

been written by foreigners, and others; those chiefly known in England, are Dr. Shaw's Travels, published in 1738, Mr. de Chateaubriand's Itinerary, and Macgill's account of Tunis, &c. Both the latter are works of considerable merit, and only just given to the public; the first is nearly out of print, and however interesting to the scholar, cannot certainly be said to possess the smallest attraction with the politician or merchant. I am sorry that the amiable de Chateaubriand's short stay at Tunis prevented him from extending his inquiries, as, from the beautiful specimen he has favored us with, and his fascinating style of writing, every thing might have been expected from such a refined scholar and good judge of human nature. To Mr. Macgill, who, in spite of criticism, is a man of independent character, and very liberal principles, the public are much indebted, particularly for the important commercial hints with which his Travels in Turkey and his book on Tunis abound: his merit will also be considerably enhanced when it is known, that amidst the troubles and difficulties of a mercantile life, he has found leisure to communicate useful information to his country—a task seldom appreciated. As his work is chiefly confined to the capital and its vicinity, and is more particularly addressed to the mercantile world, it will I hope be found, that what I have written does not materially interfere with its contents. The utmost precaution was observed in collecting facts of every kind, and notwithstanding my

having been disappointed in the contributions of several persons who resided there, I do not despair of having elucidated many points relative to the Regency, which nothing but a long intercourse with the people and attentive examination of their character could have enabled me to know.

Malta has been the theme of several writers, and the cumbrous volumes of Pantaleone, Bosio, del Pozzo, Badovin, and many others, have long, except amongst the votaries of religious superstition, been consigned to merited oblivion. Vertot's History of the Knights holds a higher rank, and with much justice, in the literary world; Boisgelin, and one or two others have illustrated the island's situation when first occupied by our troops. Mr. Galt's volume is too fresh in the public mind to require any comment of mine; and without pretending to form a correct opinion of its merits, I have only to observe, that to write an accurate account of any place, something more is required of an author, than the temporary and inadequate observation of a few weeks can be supposed to afford him.

From a perusal of several of the above mentioned works, I have not been able to procure any thing calculated to illustrate the island's situation to such a degree as to have rendered something more unnecessary; and while it was left to the scholar and painter to describe its antiquities and public buildings, I have thought it more impor-

tant for the interests of my country, to explain the exact situation of its civil and political relations at present.

My inexperience in more regular composition suggested the propriety of giving the form of letters to this work, particularly as the greatest part was written at those places from whence the letters are dated; yet as in one or two instances the arrangement may appear to produce incongruous anachronisms, I may be permitted to observe, that these points, though of a later date, were of too much importance to be omitted, and I have therefore embodied them in those parts of the work to which they refer.

Prompted by a wish of illustrating several important facts, and, in some instances, political opinions which are apt to excite controversy, the number and extent of my quotations exceed every previous anticipation; they will, however, I trust, be found to bear so strongly on the subject, that on this score at least, I may escape the charge of having had a desire to swell out my work with the opinions of other people.

The maps prefixed to each volume have been prepared by Mr. Neele with his accustomed accuracy, from a partial survey and examination of my own, while abroad; it is hoped that in every respect they will be found to differ from those generally attached to works of this sort.

Appendices are but too frequently composed of documents in which the public can feel no inter-

est, and the perusal of which only tend to fatigue individuals; this circumstance induces me to observe that nothing would have led me to subjoin so large a one to my letters, except a conviction that for the most part they are particularly important, not only as confirming by the evidence of facts my principal assertions, but being in themselves sufficient to illustrate the civil and political relations of Sicily and Malta.

Had it been my fate to have soared into the higher walks of literature, I should probably have been honoured with a degree of fame, more lasting than that which can accrue from a book of travels; but with all its defects I trust it will be found not to contain any sentiments, whether upon politics or morality, which are materially in opposition to the generally received opinions upon those important subjects.

I should have most readily published their names, and acknowledged the obligations I am under to many persons in Sicily and other places, who were so good as to contribute largely to my inquiries; but considering their respective situations, and the governments they live under, bringing them thus into notice, would I am certain, have been highly imprudent; they will therefore, I hope, be satisfied with this expression of my warmest thanks, and an assurance that I have endeavoured to profit by their communications for the public good.

I can never expect to be distinguished as a

literary character; my pen was resorted to with a view of serving the government under which it has been hitherto my pride and duty to serve; aware of the numerous unpleasantries to which undertakings of this kind may subject a man, I am fully prepared to meet them all, and whether my efforts are productive of utility or not, I shall ever be consoled by the reflection that the sufferings of an individual, however severe, are of no consequence whatever, when put in competition with the interests of his country.

London, May, 1813.

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Desert
PALUS SINARA of Pliny
Dog Water
Fishery
SICILY
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
CYRENAICA
LIBYA
GULF of SIRRA or GREAT SYRTIS
Desert of Barca

LETTERS FROM SICILY.

Te greges centum, Siculæque circum
Mugiunt Vaccæ; tibi tollit hinnitum
Apta quadrigis equa; te bis Afro
Murice tinctæ
Vestiunt lanæ: mihi parva rura, et
Spiritum Graïæ tenuem Camœnæ
Parca non mendax dedit, et malignum
Spernere vulgus.

Hor. *Lib. II., Od.* xvi.

LETTER I.

Terra tribus scopulis vastum procurrit in æquor,
Trinacris; a positu nomen adepta loci.

OVID, *Fast.* IV.

Antiquity—Geographical Position—Divisions—Population—Climate—Earthquakes—Face of the Country—Rivers—Lakes—Minerals—Mineral Waters—Zoology—Natural Productions, &c. &c.

Sicily, 1812.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

As the recollection of past scenes is generally more delightful than perhaps the most agreeable moments themselves, I might be in some measure excused, for thus attempting to delineate the result of my own actual experience in this long celebrated island. It is not, however, solely for my own gratification that I undertake this arduous task: it is a debt every man owes to society, to make it wiser and better, if he can, and in thus endeavouring to pay up my own arrears, to whom can I with more propriety delegate the office of receiver, than to him whose early friendship and long continued intimacy, will give a value to the tribute beyond what its own merits deserve?

I must premise, however, that in any attempt to describe the geographical position of this island, it is impossible to avoid repeating many things already before the public; this circumstance has determined me not to devote much time to that part of the undertaking, so that I shall only trouble you with what may be necessary to introduce the original design.

The people of Sicily boast an antiquity coeval with the infant states of Greece; but their early history, like that of all classical countries, is obscured by fabulous tradition, or vague poetical allusion, from which no specific conclusion can be drawn. According to Homer, who calls it the Island of the Sun, and makes it the scene of his beautiful episode, in the ninth book of the Odyssey, the Cyclops were its first inhabitants; but the Sicilian historians, who are generally fond of the marvellous, insist that their remotest forefathers were no less than giants. Whatever vanity may be ascribed to this assertion, it is universally credited by the literati of the present day; and to render the fact more incontrovertible, Fazzello, their famous Latin historian of the sixteenth century, relates, that in 1342 a number of colossal bones of an immense size were discovered near Mount Erix, some of which were to be seen in his time; it was added, by way of corroboration I presume, that in 1516 the teeth were made a present of to the Pope. This gigantic relation concludes by stating, that in 1550 another skele-

ton was found near Syracuse, which measured twenty-two cubits, (thirty-three feet,) in length.* Leaving this very important point to the discussions of those interested in it, and turning to more rational authorities, it would appear that a colony of Sicanians, so called from a river in Catalonia, the banks of which they inhabited, passed over here, and even gave the name of Sicania to the island, which it retained many ages, but was afterwards called Trinacria, alluding to its three celebrated promontories, Pachinus, Pelorus, and Lilebeum. A controversy has been founded on the Roman appellation of Triquetra, many writers alledging that this was derived from a renowned hero, Trinacia, the son of Neptune: and in order to complete this account of such diversity of opinion as to names and facts, it should be added, that some writers disbelieving Thucydides, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and others, are convinced of Sicily having been peopled from the shores of Italy, a conjecture on every account more probable than any of the former. Without, however, dwelling upon disputes which seldom tend to illustrate such intricate points, it cannot escape the most superficial observer who comes here,

* The venerable author might have, I think, in this part of his narrative, imitated the praiseworthy candour of Josephus, who very properly says to his reader, on relating any thing likely to stagger a man's belief, "Of this you may believe as much as you please."

that nature has, with an unsparing and lavish hand, bestowed on this island, attributes which have ever rendered it at once the envy and admiration of surrounding nations, few of whom have considered the interests or happiness of the people, which have, with scarcely any one exception, been always made subservient to views of conquest or ambition.

Sicily, the largest of the Mediterranean islands, is nearly in the form of a triangle; it is situated between 36° 30′, and 38° 12′ of north latitude, and 12° 42′, and 16° 10′ east longitude; its extreme length from the Strait of Messina to Cape Lilebeum, is 180 miles, with a breadth of 133, making in all above 1200 square miles of surface. The island's circumference includes nearly 700 miles, with scarcely a single danger on the coast to obstruct the navigator, and some of the finest harbours in the world; while the interior presents to the traveller a most happy succession of hills and plains, an unexampled exuberance of soil, abundant sources of water, and inexhaustible picturesque beauty.

The division of Sicily into *Valli* was made by the Saracens, and though very defective, has been continued ever since their expulsion. These consist of three, Val di Mazzara on the west, Val di Noto, and Val Demona on the east. The principal maritime cities in the first, consist of Palermo, Trapani, Marsala, Mazzara, Sciacca, and Girgenti; those of the second are Catania, Agosta, and Sy-

racuse; and in the third, Messina, Taurmina, Cefalu, and Milazzo. By a calculation made in 1790, there were above three hundred and eighty cities, towns, and villages, on the island, of which number, three hundred and forty were the property of the barons.

It does not appear that any enumeration of the people of Sicily took place in modern times till the period of La Nuza's vice-royalty, in 1500, when the total number did not exceed 488,500, a frightful diminution when compared to its boasted 5,000,000, in the more prosperous days of Hiero and Timoleon; but as a statistical writer upon the island observes, it belongs to the politician to develope the causes which have led to the lamentable reduction. The following statement extracted from the parliamentary history of Mongitore, serves to show the progressive advancement of this important source of national wealth, since the period at which the Sicilian government seemed to think it an object worthy of their solicitude and attention.

Year	*No. of Souls.*	*Year*	*No. of Souls.*
In 1501	559,146	1623	859,221
1548	816,152	1636	1,034,743
1570	788,362	1642	888,062
1583	801,401	1665	873,742
1595	730,770	1681	1,011,076
1597	831,944	1714	983,163*.
1615	857,699		

* In this account the population of Palermo, Catania,

In examining the above, a person is almost enabled to perceive the fluctuating and unhappy state of this island in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; and when even in the course of a few years, such a decrease as 146,681, should have occurred, the dreadful manner in which Sicily was governed in those days is further seen, for it appears, that from 1548 till the accession of the Bourbons in 1734, no increase of any consequence had been effected in the island's population. In 1777 it was estimated at 1,300,000, and by the enumeration of 1798, which was made with a view of knowing how to levy the taxes with more precision, the total number of souls was found considerably to exceed 1,600,000, at which the present population of Sicily is estimated in the island; but it seems that a different opinion is entertained by the British public, as in a small Italian pamphlet,* lately published, and said to have been honoured with the present ministry's patronage. The author asserts, in opposition to the translator of the Abbate Balsamo's work, that the actual population does not exceed 1,250,000 souls. Although I agree most unequivocally with all the writer's political ideas, the authorities which I have had the means of

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and Messina, are omitted. These three cities in the first year's enumeration did not contain altogether more than 70,653 souls.

* "Critica d'un Opera," &c.—Dulau and Co., London, 1811.

consulting, during my residence here, convince me that he underrates it very considerably. When the principal motive of ascertaining the peoples' numbers in 1798 is considered, and the interest they had to conceal them as much as possible, we may readily believe that the account published in the diaries of that period was not exaggerated. For the more perfect elucidation of this point, I should add, that the respective population of each province was as follows, viz. Val di Noto 417,274, Val Demona, 427,611, and Val di Mazzara, 788,999; these, together with 15,000 foreigners, would make a grand total of 1,648,984, and the Neapolitans alone amount now to 50,000. Those who have hitherto treated upon this subject, have not, I think, very maturely considered the causes which have for some years been influencing the island's population. Previous to the arrival of the court, the peoples' prosperity had been rapidly increasing for many years; yet that event, from whence so many blessings ought to have emanated, has produced an effect directly contrary; and what with the corruption of the government, disorder of finances, and incessant political squabbles, the island's prosperity has been as rapidly retrograding as it advanced before, if not much more so.*

* The sect of Jews was expelled from Sicily in 1492, by an edict of Ferdinand of Spain, since which, until the arrival of the British army, the members of that persuasion have been indis-

Of the various viceroys who have governed Sicily, there are only two whose memory is revered by the people: the first of these is the great Cariacciola, a man who, if he had not been impeded by the machinations of a base faction, would soon have restored the island to some portion of its former splendour, both as to population and riches; his successor Prince Caramanico, was equally beloved by the inhabitants, and is said to have entertained projects of the utmost grandeur with respect to Sicily's regeneration; but the beneficent designs of this truly estimable nobleman were frustrated in their formation, and there are persons here who insinuate that his death was occasioned by poison. That event happened in the autumn of 1795, and is only mentioned for the purpose of stating, that since these two ministers ruled, there have been scarcely any others, who evinced much regard for the interests of the lower classes, consequently, no material advance could have been made in the population; amongst other causes that have affected it, the difficulty of interior communication, severity of the feudal laws, and deteriorated state of agriculture, are foremost. The peasantry perceiving that it was totally impossible to stem the torrent of oppressions that weighed them down, have deserted many villages,

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criminately excluded from settling in the island. A few have latterly contrived to establish themselves at Messina, to the great annoyance of the inhabitants.

and flocked in thousands to the capital, and other cities of the sea coast, in the hope that they would obtain the means of existence more easily, but still more anxious to avoid the tyranny of local domination. The foregoing fact has impressed many persons with an idea, that population has experienced a decrease within the last ten years; but the case is very different: and although the island's civil and political situation is fully as bad as it has been during the last fifty years, it is a gratifying truth, that there still remains a comparatively extensive population, which only requires a new and improved order of things to bring it to useful maturity.*

Many writers, both ancient and modern, have contended that Sicily was originally joined to the continent, and only separated by one of those natural shocks to which this country is so very subject. One of the arguments adduced in support of this opinion is, that the range of mountains extending from Messina towards Trapani appear to be evidently a continuation of the Appenines, which divide Italy and terminate at Reggio, opposite the above-mentioned city: this is a conjecture that must ever rest on the most vague foundation; but the inquiry is infinitely more important to naturalists than politicians, particularly those of England, as we owe our present influence here to

* By an ancient usage of Sicily, all those who happen to have twelve children living are entitled to a pension.

the separation, no matter from what cause it has been derived.

With the exception of *Mal Aria*, the climate of Sicily is equal to the finest in Europe. Upon the causes and effects of that destructive atmosphere, a great deal has been said, but very little to the satisfaction of the public: it therefore still remains open as one of the most interesting objects of professional and philosophical investigation in this island. It was for a long time believed, that *Mal Aria* was altogether confined to the low and marshy grounds; this idea is now said to be completely exploded, experience having proved that towns built on the highest hills are sometimes affected by it; yet there cannot be a doubt, that the cultivation of certain articles which require large quantities of water to bring them forward, is invariably found to infect the air, and generate the *Mal Aria* fully as much as the most swampy ground, which, in the country-people's opinion, is unquestionably the cause of it. From all the inquiries I have made, added to personal observations on the subject, the interference of the legislature can alone diminish the effects now produced by this extensive evil. With respect to the principle of draining lands, it is neither understood nor practised, and as to several proprietors, from motives of self-interest, persisting in the growth of rice and flax, which carries off so many hundreds annually, nothing can be more reprehensible; for both these productions

might be procured from without much cheaper, and of a far better quality than they are in Sicily; whereas, the grounds devoted to their cultivation at present, must become sources of infinitely greater profit when converted into pasturage or arable lands. Admitting, however, that the quantity of them now grown, adds a little to the national wealth, can that be a sufficient compensation for the sacrifice of so many lives, and rendering the climate of several districts in the island altogether intolerable? At a small village called Rucello di Termini, beautifully situated close to the sea, and between Termini and Cefalu, there is a large tract of ground, the property of Prince Fornaro, entirely devoted to the cultivation of rice. The inhabitants of this place, who do not exceed three hundred and fifty, exhibit a most melancholy and wretched appearance to the traveller, who can only visit the spot in winter, for during the summer a visit is highly dangerous, owing to the state of the air. There is not a soul here, whether male or female, that the *Mal Aria* has not affected in some way or other; children, if not sent to be nursed at another part of the country, are sure to fall a sacrifice to it; and to complete the picture, few instances are upon record of any persons having exceeded the age of forty! In the neighbourhood of Milazzo, the people are also subject to Mal Aria, and nearly from similar causes. At Syracuse the inhabitants suffer considerably, independently of the marshy ground near

the town, which, however, affords every facility of being easily drained, whilst hemp and flax are encouraged with the greatest assiduity. Towards Marsala and Castel Vetrano, there are marshes which cover several miles of ground; which in the opinions of several English agriculturists might be restored to cultivation in the course of a few months. While these causes of pestilence and disease are suffered to exist, without any steps being taken either by the government or public spirited individuals to remove them, an insuperable barrier will be opposed to the island's prosperity, and the people must continue to support all the horrors of their present situation. Persons attacked by *Mal Aria*, usually begin to feel its effects in the autumn: the symptoms are like those of an intermittent fever, a violent inclination to sleep, head-ache, and debility, which are shortly succeeded by dropsy; the patient assuming a pallid and emaciated countenance, lingers till December or January, but is very seldom known to survive beyond that time. To prove how little the lower orders know of the power of proper medical assistance, they tell you with the greatest confidence, that when once you are affected with it, there is no effectual remedy. At Rucello, where one half of the population are generally confined to their houses, there is not even a resident apothecary: it being necessary when the aid of a professional man is wanted, to send to Termini, fourteen miles off. The same

want of medical assistance is equally felt in most of the country towns. The measures taken for rendering vaccination general throughout the island have been so badly executed, that the small pox still continues to make considerable ravages. In many places the people are so superstitious, or rather incredulous, that your utmost efforts cannot persuade them of its efficacy. The dissemination of this singular blessing, under the immediate patronage of the Sicilian government, is particularly desirable.

Since the dreadful plague at Messina, in 1743, which was solely occasioned by the *Sanita's* neglect there, the island has been entirely free from epidemy; nor do I think there is any climate on earth more wholesome than those parts of it which are unaffected by *Mal Aria*. A number of valetudinarians from other countries have experienced the greatest benefit from a residence here; that is to say, when regulated by an abstemious mode of living, which is not always observed by our countrymen, who, though immersed in all the gaieties of Palermo, very often complain of the climate, and think it hard they are not restored much sooner to the blessings of health.

Very heavy falls of rain take place between October and April at different periods; during these, the effects of humidity are much felt, more especially in the capital. The introduction of fireplaces, hitherto unknown, will tend to obviate,

in a great measure, the dampness so prevalent in all the houses. It is hoped, that when the utility of these are found out, they will be generally adopted through the other parts of Sicily. Snow is confined to the mountains, it being extremely rare to see any on the low grounds. Winds, though variable, blow from the westward for nearly two-thirds of the year; severe gales are sometimes felt during the winter, but they seldom continue for more than forty eight hours, or even so long. It would be difficult to find language equal to a description of the Sicilian spring, for whether you consider the charming serenity of atmosphere, rapidity of vegetation, or diversified landscape that every where surround you, the scene is truly delightful.

> Alike the rising and declining year
> Dispense the varied gifts of summer here,
> Through every season blooms the tender rose,
> The shelter'd vi'let here for ever blows.*

Towards July and August, the "cooling western breeze" is sometimes interrupted by a Scirocco; this lasts generally for about three days, and though very unpleasant in all parts of the island, it is really intolerable at Palermo, where the inhabitants are literally in a state of partial suffocation during its continuance. Storms of thunder and lightning occur chiefly in the winter

* Horæ Ionicæ.

months, but they are neither so lasting nor dangerous as in England; indeed, very few accidents happen from their effects. Shocks of earthquakes are altogether confined to the immediate vicinity of Ætna and Messina, and render a residence in the latter place much less agreeable, than it would otherwise be from the beautiful country by which it is surrounded, and the pure air found there.

Notwithstanding this island's being so subject to natural shocks, it does not appear that the sea has made the least encroachment on any part of it: and there is scarcely any tide perceptible, except in the Faro of Messina where it runs with amazing rapidity. In addition to these remarks, it may be presumed, that no alteration whatever of climate has occurred; as, when stimulated by the hand of industry, Sicily is found to possess all those productive qualities for which it was so celebrated at the remotest periods of antiquity.

When Cicero called this island the granary of Italy, and nurse of the Roman people, it would have been extremely difficult to persuade that great orator that a time might come, when she would be unable to support a third of what her population was in those days, without foreign aid; such has unhappily been the case, and while the philosopher sees in it one of those melancholy changes to which nations are destined, the man of feeling, who visits Sicily, is every moment induced to deplore that fatal system of government,

and total absence of legislative wisdom, by the exercise of which the people can alone regain any portion of their former splendour and prosperity.

Although intersected by several distinct chains of hills and mountains,* there are many extensive plains in different parts of this island; those of Catania, Syracuse, Terra Nuova, and Milazzo, are the most celebrated and productive, yielding corn, oil, and wine, in great abundance. From Sciacca round to Trapani, a distance of more than one hundred miles, the land presents a very even surface for several miles towards the interior; in the Gulf of Castello Mare, and vicinity of Palermo, the country is also quite level, but chiefly devoted to the vine and olive tree. Of lakes, there are only two of any magnitude; the largest of these, called the *Biviere*, and said by the poets of antiquity to be amongst the labours of Hercules, is situated eight miles south of Catania, and about the same distance from the sea. In winter the circumference of this extensive piece of water often exceeds twenty miles; whereas, during the summer heat, it is generally reduced to twelve, and sometimes less, leaving an immense tract of swampy ground to spread death and

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* The extreme height of the principal mountains in Sicily are as follow:

Mount Ætna	9660 feet
Montagne della Regina	3660
Mount Enna, on which Castro Giovanni is built	2880

contagion round the adjacent country. From the great space occupied by the lake, and its ruinous effect in creating *Mal Aria*, it is naturally much spoken of by the Sicilians, many of whom assert, that under a different state of things, measures might be adopted to convert it into a spacious harbour, and by making embankments, thus to remove the cause of disease which it now occasions. This supposition, is I confess, very much strengthened by an attentive examination of the place; the depth of water towards its centre is very considerable, but extremely shallow all round the sides; the bottom is every where quite soft, being composed of a blackish sort of clay; and there is a channel which communicates with the sea, that might be deepened with ease. It is impossible to calculate the importance or utility of a work of the above nature; its practicability is not, perhaps, unquestionable; however, in the actual state of this island, a speculation of this magnitude is made in vain: to render the execution of such a design even possible, it would be necessary to bring the British house of commons to Palermo.

The lake is amongst the immense possessions of Prince Butera, who farms it out annually, as a fishery, for a very large sum of money; the fish caught there consist of mullet, eels, &c. all of a fine quality, and in the utmost abundance, being sent for sale to every part of the island. The once famous Pergusa, within a few miles of Castro Giovanni, is only five miles in circumference, and

neither distinguished for those rural charms, nor so frequented by Sicilian shepherds, as its banks were in the days of Theocritus; in the present desolated aspect of this place, we cannot trace any of those features thus sung by our own admirable poet——

> ——————" that fair field
> Of Enna, where Proserpin' gathering flowers,
> Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis
> Was gather'd, which cost Ceres all that pain
> To seek her thro' the world." *

The eels and trout, which are taken in immense quantities here, are esteemed as the finest in Sicily, and supply the capital with great profusion.

The celebrated sulphureous lake, noticed so particularly by Diodorus, is situated near Palegonia in the Val de Noto, and though reduced to a very diminutive size, it possesses the same qualities as formerly, except that of boiling, which was probably an exaggeration of ancient authors. That singular and beautiful phenomenon of the Fata Morgana is also frequently seen on this lake.

Amidst innumerable minor streams, there are only three worthy the appellation of rivers in this island; the once celebrated *Himera Settentrionale*, now called Fiume Grande, rises in the vicinity of Polizzi, and discharging itself into the sea, between Termini and Roccella, forms the eastern boundary of Val de Mazzara. The *Himera Meri-*

* Par. Lost, Book IV.

dionale, a much larger river, has its source not far from the former, in the Madonie mountains, and taking a southern course, is emptied into the African Sea at Licata; it is at present called Fiume Salso. The *Giaretta*, or *Symæthus* of antiquity, commencing at Nicosia in the Val Demona, winds round the western base of Mount Etna, and, joined by several smaller streams, enters the sea near Catania. The mountainous nature of the country, and continual changes occasioned by the summer and winter, preclude the possibility of ever making the rivers of Sicily subservient to commercial purposes. This is certainly a misfortune, which is rendered still more severe, from there being but few bridges thrown over them at present, so that in the rainy seasons, they are sometimes impassable for weeks together.

The Abate Ferrara of Catania, to whom the literary world is particularly indebted for his ingenious researches in natural history, has proved, in a late publication, "I Campi Flegrei della Sicilia," that the amazing fecundity of this island is to be solely attributed to its happy temperature of climate and natural richness of soil, and not, as others have asserted, to the quantity of volcanic matter which is spread over its surface: this, according to the above writer, is confined to the immediate neighbourhood of Mount Etna, the remainder of the soil being invariably composed of a calcareous loamy mould, descending every where to an amazing depth; and which is, above all others, calculated

to promote that wonderful productive quality for which Sicily is so pre-eminent. Amongst innumerable other arguments brought forward by the Abate Ferrara, he states, that independent of those copious dews which supply the place of rain during the early part of summer, the snow accumulated on the mountains in winter begins to melt towards June, and forming a thousand rivulets, gives new vigour and excitement to the growing crops.*

In lamenting the decline of all the useful arts in Sicily, perhaps nothing is more to be deplored than the present state of agriculture; and in that, amongst other things, the total neglect which has evidently been evinced, both towards the care and cultivation of trees. There are, indeed, many regions covered with wood, in several parts of the island, but they bear no proportion to the infinity of spots now naked, yet admirably adapted for the growth of timber. In a future letter I shall attempt to prove the resources which even now we may draw from the forests of Sicily, and shall at present satisfy myself with merely observing, that all the

* The work on "*Campi Flegrei*," if published in any other country, would have been more beneficial to science and art than it has been here, where the people are more intent upon the first steps which lead to happiness, than on improving agriculture; it was dedicated to Sir J. Stuart, the commander in chief of the forces, who has, on every occasion, given all that encouragement to the literati of this island, that his circumscribed means would admit of.

laws relative to them, whether of a useful or necessary character, have been, and continue to be, most grossly violated by the authority of those whom I think it superfluous to name; and moreover, that should the system of the last six or seven years be pursued, the woods of Sicily must cease to be of the smallest utility to government, and of very little to the inhabitants. Should this important point occupy the attention of the future administration, the result will be such as to cause great benefit, and create general satisfaction.

The natives of Sicily pride themselves on being less indebted to the bounty of other nations than any people upon earth. A short account of the various productions with which the island so profusely abounds, will justify what to a stranger may appear to partake of that egotism so remarkable in their national character.

The minerals of Sicily have long been celebrated both for their abundance and variety; the mines worked by the Greeks in the vicinity of Agrigentum, and those of the Mamertines, in the neighbourhood of Zanclea, were extremely productive; these came to the Romans; and in more modern times, it appears that not only the Saracens, but every succeeding nation which has possessed the island, appreciated their utility, and derived very considerable advantages from them. Latterly, they have experienced the fate of many other sources of wealth in the island. Some, indeed, have endeavoured to under-rate the importance of the

mines in Sicily; but recent inquiries, accompanied with experiments, prove to demonstration, that whenever the island's situation begins to be ameliorated, these may also be added to the list of its important productions. Gold, silver, and lead, are found in several parts of Val Demona and Val de Noto, particularly in the following places: Fiume di Nisi, Marineo, Mount Tessino, Rigalmuto, Contessa, Scaletta, Taurmina, Bondachella, Novana, Prizzi, Ali, Gallidano, Guiliana, Caccamo, Vizzini, San Filippo d'Argiro, and Monte Scuderi. Near a place called San Guiseppi very large quantities of lead have been found; iron and copper are also abundant: the former is found in the neighbourhood of Sante Lucia Mandanici, Bronte, Trizzi, Novaro, Santo Stefano di Bovina, Taurmina, Montebano, Tortorici, Milazzo, Leonforte, and Fiume di Nisi. Large quantities of copper have been procured in the vicinity of Monte Lauro, San Marco, Nicosia, Ali, and Miselmeri. While Sicily was an appendage of the house of Austria, some very successful efforts were made by Charles the Sixth, and several very rich veins of gold and silver were discovered. I shall mention the principal ones, for the information of those who may, on some future occasion, be disposed to investigate such an important subject. The Val Demona is evidently by far the richest in metallic productions; for, by a minute investigation of several spots during the last century, the result was as follows. Near Fiume di Nisi and Ali there were

found 26 veins; at Savoi, 7; Limina, 6; Mandanici, 2; Forza di Agro, 1; Taurmino, 1; Francavilla, 2; near Fondichelli di Noara, 26; and at Castro Reale, 2; all extremely rich in silver, copper, and lead.

According to the reports delivered to the Supreme Council of Finance of Charles III. by the Superintendant of mines, the most flattering results may be anticipated, whenever the island's situation admits their being opened again. It appears by the reports, on a strict examination of the great mine of San Carlos, near Fiume di Nisi, that it contains very deep and extensive veins, some of which extend at least half a mile towards the center of the mountain. From the seven points which were opened, every 175 lbs. of ore yielded 8 ounces of silver and 52 lbs. of copper. The mine opened at Fondichelli di Noara was not less productive; for, the seven different spots worked at that place have yielded, on an average, for each cantar of 175 lbs. avpirdupois, viz. that of San Guiseppe, 3 oz. of silver, and nearly 100 lbs. of lead; the mine of Spicchio, 12 oz. of silver and 29 lbs. of copper; and that of St. Amalia, 16 oz. of silver and 32 lbs. of copper. The veins of lead in these are very numerous. No very effectual method has ever been resorted to in modern times for working these mines: some very radical defects are known to have existed when connected with the plans adopted by the Austrian government; and the state of his present Sicilian Ma-

jesty's affairs since the revolution has been such, as to render any effort with respect to them totally impossible; but from the facts in the foregoing statement of their actual analysis, it is to be hoped that those who have ever hitherto entertained doubts as to their existence, will no longer hesitate to consider the mines of Sicily as worthy of attention.

The astonishing variety of marbles found all over the island is no less a source of admiration to the traveller who visits Sicily. I have, in many collections at Catania and Palermo, seen more than 140 specimens of the most distinct and beautiful you can imagine. In going through the country, you are often surprized, on examining a cottage or stable, to find the greatest part of it built of fine white marble, not unlike that of Paros. There are immense quantities of this sort near Castro Giovanni and its vicinity. To the marbles of Sicily may be added the following list of *pietri duri*, which are profusely employed in ornamenting the churches of every part of the island: agate, jasper,* lapis lazuli, porphyry, granite, and alabaster. These were found at Santa Stefano di Bovinos, Fiume di Nisi, San Giuliana, &c.

Salinus records, that on the banks of the Drillo, the ancient *Achates*, was found that celebrated agate which Pyrrhus wore on his finger, upon

* In a collection of the Abate Dominio Tata, at Messina, there are no less than 94 jaspers of different qualities, and 115 agates.

which the nine Muses were represented, and Apollo with the lyre in his hand.

The very confined population, added to the state of politics in the island, will be, I fear, for many years, a great barrier to improvement. I confess there are an infinity of other, and more important, plans, to be put into execution, before it would be either wise or prudent to devote any part of the laborious poor to the object of mining.

The process of making salt on the sea-coast is so extremely cheap and simple, that it is scarcely necessary to state, that very fine mines, containing that article in great abundance, have been discovered in the neighbourhood of Castro Giovanni, where its quality is supposed to be as fine as any in the world. There is also a large coal mine near Messina, the produce of which was for a long time used in working the silver mines; it is said to excel in many respects that of Newcastle, and emits a much less quantity of smoke. The finest materials for building are every where found, although the difficulty of land-carriage renders it extremely laborious, and often impossible to transport large masses of stone, on which account many are induced to dispense with the fine stone that may be had in the vicinity of Palermo and Messina, substituting a species of cement which is found to be extremely durable.

The mineral waters of this island were infinitely more celebrated in antiquity than during the present time; but I cannot suppose, on that account,

that their virtues can have experienced any diminution: I can only impute the little estimation, in which they appear to be held, to the extreme want of comfort experienced by those English travellers who may have occasionally visited them. The efficacy of many of these waters continues to be proved daily by the natives who have tried them: the principal ones, and which were famous amongst the Romans, are those of Sciacca, *Aqua Selinuntiæ;* of Termini, called by the Romans *Thermæ Himerenses:* and of Segesta *Aquas Egestanus*, between Alcamo and the Temple of Segesta, in the Gulf of Castello Mare.

The mineral waters of Sicily are generally divided into two classes, those of hot and cold, and vary in their effects in proportion to the respective chemical particles with which they are impregnated. The 1st., or *smactites*, are said to possess a purgative quality. Such are those of the ecclesiastical seminary at Messina, at Ali Reale, and Noto. 2d. *Di sal commune*, like those of Castro Giovanni. 3d. *Vitriolic*, like that of Gianissileri and Petralia. 4th. *Ferruginous*, like that of the well of San Vito at Mazzara, and Accia, near Palermo. Some also abound in particles of copper. 5. *Aquæ vitriolicæ cupri*, at Milicia. 6. The *Salnitrati (Seleniitenses)* of Monreale. 7. The *Alcaline*, which ferment by the introduction of acids, and have a bluish colour. 8. *L'aqua al sal neutro catartico*, like that of the holy water near Palermo Mole, at the Piani di' Greci, and

Noto. The latter are held in equal esteem with those of Spa, Epsom, or Toplitz, operating as powerful stomachics and balsamic purgatives. 9. There are also the bituminous found at Petralia, Nicosia, Girgenti, Spaccaforna, and several other places.

The *Aquæ Termali* only possess two conspicuous qualities; these are, sulphureous and chalybeate. Of the first, those of Ali, near Messina, are said to possess a heat equal to 33 degrees of Reaumur's thermometer, and are of an acid taste, and rather sharp; those of Termini, the most salubrious in Sicily, are acid, and equal to 41 deg. of the thermometer; in those of Cefalu, near Corleone, the alkali predominates, and their heat is equal to 39½ deg.; whilst the baths of Sciacca have a powerful astringent quality, and 42 degrees of heat. The *ferruginous* are found at Sclafani, and have 42 degrees of heat; these are efficacious in all cases of morbid debility.

Both the animal and vegetable worlds of this island afford ample scope for description and panegyric, and have long been a wide theatre for the most celebrated naturalists of Europe. A succinct and interesting account of the former was some years ago published by the famous Spallanzani, whose Voyage through Sicily is much esteemed, and very generally read in Italy.

I shall content myself with stating, that no island in the world is so justly celebrated, either for the excellence or variety of animals with which

it is stocked; although it is much to be regretted that the breed of cattle and horses has not, by any means, made so great a progress as might be expected; and the excessive demand for the former during the last seven years has had most powerful and injurious effects on the general agricultural interest of the island. A very large quantity of oxen are employed in Sicily both for the purposes of tillage and carriage: this is rendered absolutely necessary by the limited population of the island, and the number of horses put in continual requisition for the service of the army. This cause has contributed to reduce the general stock of the island in such a manner, that several of the most experienced and enlightened landholders assert, that many of the evils of scarcity may be attributed solely to this circumstance. The evil, it is hoped, will be considerably diminished when the laws, which are extremely provident upon this matter, are more strictly executed, and more frequent supplies arrive from without; a circumstance which may ere long be reasonably anticipated, should energetic means be adopted with respect to the Regencies of Tripoly and Tunis, and a more extensive communication be opened with the Morea.

The mules of Sicily are highly thought of by English connoisseurs, and are really surprizing for the quantity of labour and fatigue which they are so remarkable for sustaining. Without this most useful animal, travelling in the interior would be

almost impossible; and the manner in which they are accustomed in the darkest night to traverse mountains and precepices with a heavy load, are just sources of surprize and admiration to the traveller. The litiga, not unlike our sedan chair, but carried by two mules, is a most safe and comfortable vehicle: and indeed the only one you can get in this island, if you wish to go into any part of the interior.

To the sportsman, Sicily has ever been a great source of amusement, as in every part of the island you find game in abundance. In addition to the birds found in England, the large red legged partridge and francolina are remarkably conspicuous. The former for its size and beauty, and the latter, for an exquisite flavour, unknown I believe, to such a degree in any other of the feathered tribe.

Hunting, on the other hand, is not so fascinating here as in England; the mountainous nature of the country is a barrier not easily surmounted; although, in many places, packs of hounds might be kept with advantage. His Serene Majesty has monopolized the only amusement of this sort, the wild boar hunt, a pastime neither very safe nor elegant: there are several forests in the vicinity of Palermo, in which these animals are kept, and the mischief occasioned by them on the cultivated grounds to which they have continual access, is very considerable. Upon this subject several people have suggested the importance of altogether discouraging the boar hunt, even of

exterminating them and substituting the stag and deer; the consideration of this subject is not certainly unworthy of legislative wisdom, particularly, when I assure you, that the damage done in one year by the devastations of the wild boar exceeded 60,000 ounces.

It would I fear be considered as an idle repetition to enter into the details which a more particular account of all the other animals peculiar to this island would require; and I shall only observe, that in this important article of national wealth, Sicily yields to no other place. It is, however, of the utmost consequence to add, that the laws both ancient and modern, which were found so necessary for the preservation and encouragement of the breed of cattle, have for many years been totally disregarded; and that amongst the Sicilian agriculturists, nothing is more loudly complained of than the scarcity of oxen, hitherto so successfully employed in cultivation and other laborious pursuits.

Repeated experiments have proved, that all the plants peculiar to tropical climates thrive in Sicily, in a degree not to have been expected; the plantain and banana I have seen in quite as great perfection as in any of the West India islands; and a professor of botany at Palermo has assured me, that he would engage to cultivate indigo and coffee, on the result of some experiments which he had made with the greatest success. The variety and exquisite flavour of

Sicilian fruits, have been too often described to require any further praise: the vegetables are equally good, and a very considerable acquisition to the necessaries of life, has been lately made by the introduction of, and encouragement given to the culture of potatoes; of which two very fine crops are annually yielded in the vicinity of Catania, and of some other places.

Amongst the timber found on the island, oaks, ash, pine, and elms, are principally conspicuous: and there are very extensive regions, containing large quantities of the above wood; in the whole circumference of Mount Etna, near Traina in Val Demone, in the neighbourhood of Noto and Biscari, but more particularly in the forests of Caronia and Cefalu. These woods are the exclusive property of the Sicilian government, as by a peremptory law of the island, all timber fit for construction is at the disposal of his Sicilian Majesty. An infinity of abuses have contributed to the total inefficacy of this part of the royal prerogative, and owing to a general system of neglect, some timber is allowed to be cut down by private individuals, which, if suffered to remain a few years, would be admirably calculated for the most useful naval purposes. How extremely important it is, that the British government should give this subject its due share of attention? at present I have every reason to know that the resources which the island presents in this way, are altogether unknown

to many persons of rank in Sicily, who ought to possess every information.

On looking over the list of productions which Sicily boasts, it would appear that nature had intended it to unite in itself all those advantages, only to be found separately in the various products of several other nations. A Sicilian author has estimated the number of articles which might be exported from this island, at ninety-six; this list, great as it appears, is not, I believe, an exaggerated one; amongst these, the following are the most conspicuous, as having, until these five or six years, been exported in very large quantities;* viz:, wheat, barley, beans, wines, brandy, oils, saffron, liquorice paste, silk, cotton, coral, wax, amber, manna, honey, hemp, flax, sulphur, barilla, salt, almonds, raisins, figs, pistachio nuts,

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* *Exports from Sicily.*

Wheat of three qualities,	Flax,	Salt,
Barley,	Barilla,	Almonds,
Beans,	Sulphur,	Raisins,
Peas,	Liquorice Paste,	Figs,
Wines,	Bees' wax,	Marble,
Brandy,	Honey,	Alum,
Oils,	Cantharides,	Antimony,
Silk,	Manna,	Mercury,
Cotton,	Cheese,	Lemons,
Amber,	Tartar,	Oranges,
Coral,	Pistachio nuts,	Essence of Lemon,
Hemp,	Tunny fish salted,	Do. Bergamot.
	Anchovies,	

cheese, cantharides, tartar, tunny fish salted, anchovies, fruits of every kind, alum, antimony, &c. Thus you perceive nearly forty articles, including all the principal necessaries of life, and yet Sicily languishes under all the accumulated miseries of scarcity, whilst her population is suffering an alarming diminution, and mendicity is universal.

The coasts of the island are, in every part, profusely stocked with the most exquisitely flavored fish, which serve at once to supply the people, and give useful employment to several hundred families.

Besides the tunny fish, there are scarcely any known to England, that are not also to be found on the coasts of Sicily; whilst the red mullet and sword fish, are remarkable for delicacy of flavor.

Surely, in comparing the past situation of the island with its present, there is matter of wonder and cause of inquiry; and I do not see how a great nation, like England, can more effectually secure her power, or extend her glory, than by availing herself, speedily, of the means she possesses, of eradicating the evils which continue to oppress this interesting island.

LETTER II.

Cuqmue Jetini se ultra accomodarent, statim Panormitanum urbem aggreditur, quæ pulcerrimum inter Siciliæ urbes portum habet. DIODORUS SICULUS.

Vale of Palermo—The City—its Situation—Antiquity—Historical Sketch—Air—Population—Public Establishments—Hospitals—Education—University—Libraries—Prisons—Trades and Manufactures—Monte de Pieta—Tribunals—The Mole—Military Defences—Theatres—Palaces, and other Public Buildings—Churches and Convents—Favorita—Vicinity—Botanic Garden, &c.—Commerce—Monreale—Conflagration of that Cathedral.

Sicily, 1812.

I HAD often heard of the Conco d'Oro, or Golden Shell, the appellation by which the poets of Sicily have long designated the enchanting vale of Palermo: and I confess that the singular gratification experienced on my first seeing that beautifully diversified scenery by which this capital is surrounded, far exceeded all I had been led to anticipate from the accounts of others.

The town is built close to the sea, with a luxuriant and extensive plain stretching on each side and ascending in the rear to the base of a lofty chain of mountains that form a semicircle round the capital, containing a circumference of

about forty miles. Mount Pelegrino rising majestically on the right affords shelter from the northern blasts, and gives an uncommon degree of picturesque effect; while towards the east, Cape Zaffarano, the Bagaria, and the hoary Nebrodi covered with eternal snow, in the distance, form a picture which the hand of nature is alone capable of drawing.

Palermo is one of the largest and most ancient towns in the island; some writers, particularly Fazzello, and one or two others, have laboured to prove that it was peopled by *a race of Giants*, the immediate posterity of Noah; but this supposition, like many others, may be traced to the vanity or superstition of the old authors, who wished to make every thing spring from sources connected with the Scriptures. A more rational opinion, confirmed by the authority of Polybius, and Thucydides, has long been adopted; this informs us that a colony of the Phœnicians were its first inhabitants: the situation of this town together with the two very fine ports which it possessed at that time, were temptations of a powerful nature, and well calculated to excite the attention of a trading people. The length of time they continued to dominate has not been handed down: it is merely known that they were supplanted by the Carthaginians who made it the capital of that part of Sicily which they occupied, and a great commercial emporium. These were in their turn succeeded by the Romans, shortly after the beginning of the first Punic war, when

Palermo was endowed with very extensive privileges, and amongst others honored with the appellation of a free and allied city, and allowed to be governed by its own laws; and, received the eagle which it has retained to the present day, as its principal insignia. Throughout the following wars which terminated in the destruction of Carthage, the people of this town were celebrated for their fidelity to the cause of Rome.

It was first made a royal city by Genseric, and surrounded by fortifications in the reign of Theodore, king of the Goths. The Saracens also made it the principal seat of their empire in the island: and after them, with the exception of a few years, Palermo has always been considered as the capital of Sicily.

When viewed from the sea, you would not imagine that this town is so delightfully situated; and in order to form a correct idea of its position, it is necessary to ascend mount Pelegrino.

The air of Palermo, has generally been considered as extremely salubrious, with the exception of some of the lower parts of the town which are exposed to the effect of humidity; the Scirocco is also during the summer inexpressibly oppressive, however the inhabitants are seldom visited by that obnoxious wind. The chief beauty of this city is derived from its celebrated streets, the Cassaro, and Via Maqueda, which intersecting each other at right angles, give the town a degree of regularity unknown to any other in Sicily. With

the exception of these two, little can be said in praise of the buildings, as the whole town is composed of streets built without system, or any regard to cleanliness and convenience.

The population of this town amounts, according to the most accurate calculation, to 150,000 souls. It is divided first into four quarters, called after the tutelar saints, viz. St. Agatha, St. Aliva, St. Ninfa, St. Cristina, and afterwards into thirteen parishes.

The numerous public buildings, statues, and fountains which ornament many parts of Palermo have often been the theme of panegyric. I confess neither the magnificence of the one, nor the correctness of design in the others, has produced that effect in my mind, although they appear to have excited the admiration of other travellers; there are indeed many of the hospitals, and a few private houses, which deserve being noticed, but, in general, the style of building is extremely heavy.

There are in this town several very useful and important establishments, which, if not contaminated with abuses, might be great sources of happiness to the people. Amongst these which particularly deserve notice, I shall only mention the following out of the whole of the public establishments, which are—five hospitals, one poor house, three public libraries, and ninety-six convents of which forty-five are for men, and fifty-one for the reception of women.

The grand hospital is situated in a very healthy

quarter of the town, and near the royal palace. This place was established by Alphonso of Arragon, in the 15th century, and endowed with some very considerable grants, which were thought sufficient to enable it to support two others, that of the Vicaria or public prison, and St. John ; the latter, for the reception of lunatics, and the scrofulous diseased, and the other, for persons under confinement.

The state of all the hospitals in Sicily, but more particularly here, is truly deplorable ; the limited state of the revenues and mode of administering them being of so imperfect a nature as to preclude all possibility of their being useful to the community, to that degree which ought to be expected. The grand hospital includes so many establishments in itself, that there is no wonder excited by the manner in which it is conducted : in the first place, the upper part is devoted to the reception of women, another is destined for foundlings, and the lower to male patients of every kind ; for all these purposes there are merely a surgeon, two assistants, and a dispensar whose department is extremely ill paid. The number of orphans received is very considerable, and on making the most particular inquiry I was astonished to find that the number of nurses employed scarcely ever exceeded ten ; so that it is usual for more than half of the orphans to perish for want of care : this had often been represented to the deputation appointed to govern the hospital, who are chosen by the senate, but no steps whatever

have been taken to remedy so melancholy an evil. The impossibility also of paying sufficient attention to the other patients, owing to such a limited number of assistants, and the manner of their being paid, are points which are particularly to be deplored; this being the situation of the head of so important an establishment, what must be that of those which depend on it for support? A very minute examination of these convinced me that their existence might be altogether dispensed with, and that one establishment properly supported would be of infinitely more use than all of them put together.

The hospital of St. Bartholemew is a very sumptuous building, close to the Marina, and capable of containing eight hundred persons; it is divided into two parts, for the reception of men and women. This hospital is said to possess a considerable annual rent, but the manner of its being regulated is in direct contradiction to such a supposition, there being very few patients, and scarcely any attendants kept there.*

The administration of the grand hospital consists of a nobleman, a merchant, and two rectors; the inferior offices are filled up by some capuchin friars. All my efforts to ascertain the revenues of

* I was particularly struck, while in Palermo, with the uncommon cleanliness and order which are every where to be seen in the hospital of St. John, dependant on the grand one; this is directed by the Abate Cirino who is entitled to the highest praise, when it is known how many difficulties he has to encounter.

the institution were ineffectual; for reasons best known to those who direct them. They are, however, said to be very great.

That of St. John is an establishment which owes its origin to a fraternity of monks, and appears to be very little used, being only frequented occasionally by those of the convent who may be ill; its revenue is not by any means considerable. On contemplating the degraded state of these hospitals in Palermo, the fact which I am anxious to impress upon your mind, and that merits the greatest attention, is that relative to foundlings; having been assured by an unexceptionable authority, that the number of children which were annually lost to the general population exceeded, on an average, 3,000! This is a matter of such vital importance to the interests of the country, and so serious in a moral and political point of view, that it demands immediate attention.

The system of public education here is not entitled to much more praise; but I am first to notice the *Albergo de Poveri*, or poor-house; and the elegance and magnificence of this building prove, that its glorious founder, Charles III., intended it to become of the most extensive utility. It was built in 1751, and consists of two spacious wings, one of which was finished during the life-time of that prince, whose son, the Prince of Asturias, left a legacy of 5,000 dollars per annum in perpetuity, for the purpose of finishing it,

and for the general support of the establishment. His wishes have, however, never been put into execution, as the left wing remains unfinished to this day, and nearly ten years have elapsed since the annual legacy was paid, his Highness's property in Sicily having always been administered by the Sicilian government. The building would, if completed, contain at least 2,000 persons; there are now in it only about three hundred young women who are employed in spinning silk, which yields an inconsiderable profit; there is also a small hospital attached to this place for incurables. The following statement of its present revenue, and the manner of paying those who are employed, will serve to give a more exact idea of the establishment and how far the space of its utility can possibly be extended.

Total Revenue	9070 Dollars.
Salary of Rector, per annum	300
——— Accountant	180
——— Collector	180
——— Comptroller	102
——— Two Chaplains	180
——— Governesses	180
——— Teachers	72
——— Purveyor	54
——— Agent	45
——— Professor	36
——— Physician	72
——— Surgeon	72
——— Porter	72
Deduct from Total	1545
Total	9070
Remains for support of establishment	7525

Independent of the above, there are several other occasional expences incurred in law-suits, &c. which go to reduce the annual rent of this place to less than 7,000 dollars, a sum barely sufficient to support those who are already there; and the stipend allowed to the respective officers is so excessively small, that it gives room for much dissatisfaction and in many instances of peculation. The affairs of this institution are administered by nine deputies appointed by the King, who are usually chosen from the families of the nobles. A few years ago one of these gentlemen was discovered to have plundered the funds of the hospital of 2,000 dollars, but no measures have ever been taken for the recovery of this sum; a neglect in the ruling powers which has been imputed to a general system in these people of tolerating in each other what they are themselves very often guilty of.

The correct and inviolable administration of an institution so admirable in every respect, and so well calculated to disseminate national blessings, cannot fail to have a powerful claim on the benevolent and humane; should any improvement be effected in Sicily, I hope this will occupy its due share of attention.

The state of public and private education all over the island, may be placed as amongst the principal evils under which it now labours, and will require a very particular examination hereafter; at present, I shall only mention the

university of Palermo. This is a sumptuous pile of buildings in the Via Macqueda; the edifice is not finished, there being only half of it completed; the design and plan of the institution are however in every respect truly excellent, and worthy of the most patriotic king; but the mode of organization does away, in a great measure, the good effects formerly anticipated from this establishment. There are professors here for every branch of science, a very large and extensive cabinet of curiosities, together with a collection of wax figures representing the most interesting anatomical operations: the library is said to contain nearly 40,000 volumes, and many valuable manuscripts, but the regulations which admit strangers into this part of the institution, are loudly complained of by the inhabitants of Palermo, and I was confidently informed, that, if a literary character is so unfortunate as to want any book upon subjects not relating to religion, he is peremptorily refused the privilege of reading it; this arises from the libraries being invariably superintended by a priest.

With respect to the mode of instruction, it appears that scholars of every age are admitted, by paying a certain sum annually, about seventy-five dollars. The defects so remarkable in this establishment, are confined chiefly to the tutors being selected from the convents and to the system of teaching Latin, to the exclusion of more useful instruction. I may add for the information of the inquisitive, that neither English or French is

taught here, although I presume either one or the other would be infinitely more useful to the students than any of the dead languages.

This college is supported by the public, and contains at present a few hundred pupils, those of a more advanced age, frequenting it merely in the day time; the latter are allowed to study gratis.

There are several other places intended for education; that for the sons of noblemen, in the college of Jesuits, in which a yearly sum is paid by each pupil, and another for the Civilians, directed by the order of San Joseph, are very conspicuous.

There is another establishment for the instruction of orphans, which is, I believe very well conducted; it is called the seminary of Saint Roch, and is capable of containing one hundred boys, which number is actually supported there, free of every expense, whilst all other students are admitted by paying a trifling sum per annum.

I have also to notice an establishment for the study of belles lettres and music; this is tolerably well endowed, being sufficient to support eighty orphans which number is now there; all other candidates are admitted by paying a fixed sum.

The above places might, no doubt, be fully sufficient to answer the great purpose for which they are intended; but the many abuses connected with the manner of conducting seminaries of every kind in Sicily, are such as to preclude the possibility of radical improvement, either in the education or morality of the rising generation.

There are three libraries said to be open to the public; of these, one belongs to the senate, and only contains 3,000 volumes of very ill chosen books, together with a few manuscripts: that of the Olivilla is indeed better stocked, but of less general utility to the public, owing to its being in the hands of a religious fraternity; the number of volumes here exceed 20,000, there are besides several manuscripts. The literati of Sicily are greatly indebted to the late Prince Torremuzza, who, with a liberality very unusual in any country, bequeathed his valuable collection of books, to the royal library, *Bibliotheca Reale*, which has made this the largest in the island; the number of volumes here exceed 40,000, and they are extremely well arranged in a quarter of the Jesuits college. The great utility of institutions of this sort, in countries like England, where they are impartially administered for the public good, requires no illustration; one observation is, however, irresistibly pressed on the minds of those who have carefully examined them in Palermo, and other parts of Sicily, which is that, while in the hands of some clerical character, who, is himself under the controul of persons still more bigoted, the benefit derived by the general student, must be extremely circumscribed; as the utmost difficulty always attends procuring books, which have not some immediate relation with theological subjects. So that polite literature, and history, from which our

chief advantages spring, are excluded from the public.

As influencing the public happiness and tranquillity, I have next to glance at the prisons, and shall reserve my observations upon those who inhabit them, till treating of the criminal code in general. That of the *Vicaria* is a very fine building, but unfortunately placed in the most conspicuous part of the Via Cassaro; it was built in the 16th century; and consists of three floors, and a large court in the centre. If the immortal Howard saw this receptacle in its present condition, his sensibility would be eminently called forth. There appears to be a total disregard to cleanliness; no circulation of air whatever passes throughout this important establishment, and on the top is an hospital most miserably served; the keepers, like all other public officers are so badly paid, that a field is opened to them, for every species of irregularity in the discharge of their respective duties, and repeated inquiry convinces me that they fully avail themselves of it.

The other and only civil prison in Palermo, is situated near the Mole; this is also a very spacious structure, and reserved for convicts. Some of these are generally employed in the public works, but in a very limited proportion; the Barbary slaves taken, are also confined here. The way in which this place is kept, accounts for the ill health of those who are there. In its immediate neighbourhood, there is a house of correction which

appears to be a very useful establishment; it is instituted chiefly for the purpose of punishing persons of either sex, guilty of any inferior acts of violence, and is capable of containing 200 persons: as you may very readily imagine, in a place like Palermo, it is seldom without being well filled.

All the imitative arts are carried to a degree of perfection here, which serves strongly to mark the ingenious character of the people; but the only manufacture worth noticing, is that of silk, which has continued to flourish here since the time of Ruggiero, first king of the Norman Line: the manner in which this place is conducted, would excite admiration in the most celebrated trading country; its present proprietor is a Mr. Martinez, in whose family it has continued for many years; but I understand that it has experienced the general fate of commerce, and is by no means so productive as formerly. Silks and satins, of every pattern, have been brought to a perfection here, very little inferior to those of France, and by the importation of some machinery from England, a great many improvements have been lately introduced.

There is another very important institution at Palermo, similar to that of Malta: called, *il Monte de Pieta*, which, with some improvements, would do honor to the most civilized country. Such a place in England would prevent a scene of usury and imposition, extremely detrimental to society; while the benefits to be derived from it, would be

of universal utility. The *Monte de Pieta* has been established in Sicily, for above three hundred years: and there is scarcely any considerable town in the island that has not one or two. Having taken particular care to inform myself of the state which that of Parlermo is in, at present, I was highly gratified by the result of my inquiries; although I do not say that it is exempt from many serious abuses.* There being no pawn brokers tolerated in the island, a fund was allotted by government for the purpose of forming an establishment on the same plan of pledges as in England; but with this very material, and highly important difference, that the interest paid for property, in deposit, is only 2½ per cent.; whilst the profits were to be devoted to the support of a charity school, which is actually in existence at Palermo. The boys after having received the rudiments of grammar, reading and writing, are at a proper age apprenticed: the girls being educated and supported till the age of twenty or thirty, are then, if not already provided for, suffered to enter the world, with a very handsome dowry. The Monte of Palermo is one of the finest public buildings in the town; being open to the whole population; its concerns are administered by nine deputies, not paid† and selected from the families of

* Innumerable have been the peculations of deputies and other officers in the Monte di Pieta, and I believe no circumstance is on record, of any one of them having refunded the fruits of their iniquity.

† There is besides the Monte di Pieta, that of Santa Rosalia.

noblemen, one of whom personally attends every week, and superintends the whole: subordinate to these, there are, at least, fifty officers, as usual very miserably remunerated, who perform the executive duties. The extreme regularity and order observed throughout every part of this building, are truly admirable; in fact, nothing but unwearied attention, could be sufficient to fulfil the beneficent object which it is calculated to produce; and when the wretched situation of Sicily is considered, you need not be surprized if I inform you, that both the prince and the peasant are often obliged to visit this place; it is consequently filled with immense quantities of gold, silver, and wearing apparel. If the number of Montes were increased, and more liberal salaries given to the directors and his clerks, the benefits of the institution would be wonderfully extended; as it is, however, we may say that all these advantages which a public establishment ought to possess, particularly that of embracing the best interests of humanity and active benevolence, are eminently conspicuous in the *Monte di Pieta*, of Sicily.

The tribunals are held in a very convenient structure; formerly the Inquisition, happily no longer in existence here. The manner of distributing

the tutelar saint of Palermo; which is administered in nearly the same way, and conducted upon principles of equal liberality with those of the former. Also a small one administered by the fraternity of Carmelite friars, instituted in 1493.

justice in them will more properly form the subject of a separate communication.

One of the most public-spirited works in Sicily is the Mole of Palermo.* This extends from the front of Mount Pellegrino, in a southern direction, about a quarter of a mile into the sea, and forms a port capable of containing thirty sail of the line, besides several hundred smaller vessels. The importance of keeping it in repair, and clear, to a place like Palermo, where there is no longer a natural harbour, does not demand comment; but truth requires, that I should state, that the Mole is perhaps less attended to than any other public work in the island.

Little can be said in favour of Palermo as a military position; indeed, the extreme facility of taking it gave rise to a well-known, though not very elegant, proverb, in Sicily—

"Palermo è uomo da bene,
Chi va, va, e chi viene, viene."

In more ancient times it was defended by seven towers † and strong walls; a part of some modern ramparts remain to this day, but can only be considered as impediments to improvement; indeed

* Constructed in the 16th century, when four millions of dollars were expended upon it by the Senate of Palermo. There is on its extremity a strong battery and light-house; the latter very badly attended.

† Amongst these, one called Baich was celebrated, there having been found in it an inscription, which the antiquarians of Sicily pretend to be in Chaldean characters.

there is nothing to prevent the approach of an enemy in the rear: and Mon Reale is considered as the most commanding position for the protection of Palermo. Towards the sea the defences are more respectable. The *Castello di Mare* is a strong castle, with ditches and outworks towards the land; this place is called the citadel, and is very well calculated for a garrison of two or three thousand men: the other marine works consist of several batteries, which flank the bay in different directions; they are all capable of amplification and improvement.

There are several very spacious military quarters about the town, but not all in the most eligible situations. Indeed, I believe it is generally considered as fatal to discipline if troops are suffered to remain too long in a large city; for this reason it will doubtless be an object of solicitude with the commander-in-chief to construct cheap barracks in more airy situations, outside of Palermo.

We now pay very enormous and extravagant rents for the most miserable places you can imagine, while more than thirty convents are not more than half occupied.

There are three theatres in Palermo, upon rather a small scale; that of San Ferdinando is the largest, but it cannot be compared in any manner to the Carolina, which is fitted up with a great deal of beautiful simplicity.

Having briefly noticed the public establishments, I proceed to trouble you with a few more

observations on the palaces, of which so much has been said by those who have formerly described Sicily. The royal residence is very finely situated at the top of Via Cassaro, and commands a prospect of the whole town, and surrounding scenery. It was built in the 11th century, but has since been very considerably enlarged and improved: though the irregularity of its external appearance gives but a poor idea of the apartments, which are both splendid, and more elegantly decorated than those of any other house in Palermo. Since the return of the royal family from Naples, a gallery has been prepared, and ornamented with some uncommonly fine fresco paintings by the celebrated Velasquez; it is intended for the pictures of Raphael and Schedoni, which form the pride and glory of this habitation.

There are many other fine buildings in different quarters of the town, but their outward effect is often destroyed by the mean appearance of the houses next to them. There is also a custom here, which would shock the delicacy of English taste, that of converting the lower part of all the noblemen's houses into stables and coach-houses. This is indeed practised all over Sicily, although both a source of inconvenience and reprehension.

The great fountain is the principal ornament of this city, and very deservedly admired by travellers: it is constructed on a large scale, and ornamented with a number of fine statues, nymphs,

and river-gods. This famous work was executed in Florence, at an immense expense, in 1574.

The Prince Butera's, and several adjoining palaces, are much admired for their beauty of situation and elegant style of building. The first of these is one of the most sumptuous buildings in the island; some of the apartments are extremely spacious; but, agreeable to Neapolitan taste, they are so overloaded with bad furniture and gilding in every part, that they are calculated to excite satiety rather than admiration; old tapestry is also still much used.

The Prince Belmonte's house is more chastely ornamented, and very generally admired; that of the Paterno family, and a few others, are said to be very well fitted up. One of the worst calculated for every principle, or object of convenience, in the city, is that of our own embassador: this belongs to the Duke D'Anjou, who inhabits the upper story or garret, while the representative of his Britannic Majesty is obliged to be satisfied with the lower apartments, scarcely sufficient for the accommodation of a private family. His lordship, it is hoped, will ere long receive the sanction of ministry, either to build a new house or procure one more suited to the high dignity he holds; the former plan would, on every account, be the most eligible.

There are few towns in which hydraulics have been more usefully adapted to the conveniencies of life than at Palermo, where by their means water

is conveyed to the tops of the loftiest houses, and is a great source of comfort. The same might, I presume, be adopted in the British metropolis with equal facility.

There are some solitary lamps scattered here and there about the streets of Palermo; but, as a great poet observes, they only "serve to render darkness more visible." It ought also to be stated, that the public are only favoured with the little light they give during the absence of the moon. This would certainly be a useful economical hint to the inhabitants of London!

I have stated the number of convents in the capital of Sicily to be ninety-six; the whole of these have very superb chapels attached to them, and many are well stocked with pictures, chiefly of the Italian school:* the addition of massive lamps of silver, and of statues very often ornamented with precious stones, the offerings of mistaken zeal, gives an effect to all the temples of Sicily, which one would suppose eminently calculated to excite sentiments of devotion.

In speaking of the numerous churches and places of worship here, it would be an injustice to pass over the cathedral; a building well worthy of attention, particularly to travellers of good taste. It was built and endowed by Gultieri, archbishop

* Among these are some of Pietro Novelli, who was certainly endowed both with a strength and originality of design unknown to any other Sicilian painter.

of Palermo, in the 12th century, and has had a great part of it restored in a modern style, under the auspices of the present king. The walls and belfries however remain, and are in the highest state of preservation. The style of these would be well worth the attention of many of our modern architects, as they seem to combine all the beauties of Gothic taste in a very great degree. The improvements consist of the center roof and a fine cupola, the whole of which is supported by 80 large pillars of oriental granite. A very conspicuous Latin inscription is seen here, and records the Restoration. A square space in front of the cathedral is adorned with some very fine statues, executed by the celebrated Gaggini, a native of Palermo, who flourished in the 16th century.

Independent of the above-mentioned churches, there are said to be nearly one hundred other places of worship, to which you are to add innumerable spots dedicated to some favourite saint, and ornamented with a portrait and lamp. The expense necessarily attending such an extraordinary number of religious establishments is incredibly great; but this is not the place to enlarge upon its general effects on the population of the island.

The Ziza is the most remarkable Saracenic structure now remaining in Sicily. This palace is situated within a mile of Porto Nuovo; and, from the peculiarity of its structure, is supposed to have been built by the first emirs who governed the island.

The environs of Palermo afford the traveller resources of a most agreeable kind, there being a great number of excellent roads leading out of the city in all directions; that which goes towards the north brings you to a number of beautiful country-houses, but more particularly to the Favorita, a charming residence of his Sicilian Majesty. This house is built under Mount Pelegrino, in the form of a Chinese pagoda, and has an extensive piece of ground attached to it, stocked with a large quantity of game. The whole vicinity of this palace is covered with villas and pleasure-grounds, in which exquisite fruits are cultivated, there being every where an abundance of water.

In the rear of Palermo, a good road, and gradual ascents, lead you to Monreale, four miles off; this is a suburb not unlike the Kensington-gardens of London, and is remarkable for a convent on one side, instituted for the education of noblemen's daughters, and on the other for the *Albergo di Poveri*.

The eastern sortie of the Sicilian capital leads you first to the *Villa* and Botanic Gardens; the first of these is a large garden inclosed, and very tastefully disposed with walks, shrubberies, and fountains, for the public recreation. Amongst a number of wretched marble busts and statues, there are two colossal groups in this place which are said to possess a great deal of merit; they were executed at Rome, and represent Victory and

Abundance. On the right of the Villa, you enter the Botanic Garden, where an elegant portico, constructed after the antique, and ornamented with statues of the Seasons, serves as a laboratory. It was intended that annual lectures on botany should be given her, but that laudable practice has been discontinued. The gardens are both kept in the highest order, and occasionally serve as the happy retreats of sighing lovers, or the studious philosopher. Further on, and winding along a fine beach, you arrive at the Romagnolo, an airy little village, built on the banks of the celebrated Oretus —no longer the theme of poetic admiration, having changed its course, and become considerably less than it formerly was. It is, however, still one of the most picturesque features of this delightful region; and following its course, you shortly discover all the varied beauties and excessive fertility, which strangers admire so much about Palermo. Groves of orange, olive, and fig-trees; gardens, vineyards, and refreshing streams, together with numberless cottages, give to the whole of this neighbourhood a very fascinating appearance.

"Here gushing founts, and springs that never fail,
Pour wealth and plenty through the smiling vale;
Fair smiles the plain, with myrtle hedges crown'd,
And aromatic fragrance breathes around;
The rising hill, the spreading olive's shade,
Skirt the deep ravine, and embow'r the glade
With sober tints of never-fading green,
While distant mountains close the varied scene:

Beyond the cultivated landscapes rise,
And sternly frown amidst the cloudless skies."*

Near the banks of the Oretus, there is a large space walled round, and planted with very tall cypresses. This place is known by the title of *Il Campo Santo*, (or Holy Ground,) and was prepared, during the reign of his present Sicilian Majesty, with large and extensive vaults for the reception of the dead. The appearance of this place bears all the marks of solemnity; and too much cannot be said in favour of a design which might be so beneficially adopted in any country of Europe.†

Very large quantities of excellent wine and oil are made all round the capital, and supply the wants of the inhabitants. In reference to the commerce of Palermo, I shall at present only observe, that the exports are confined to very few articles;

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* The reader will doubtless recollect Mr. Wright's elegant poem of HORÆ IONICÆ; which, in addition to the extensive classical knowledge disclosed by the author, may be considered as by far the most happy effort, hitherto published, to convey any idea of the scenery in this part of the world.

† There are probably none of our customs so severely reprehended by foreigners as that of surrounding the churches with tomb-stones. The Sicilians who have visited London observe, that St. Paul's would be a very fine edifice, if it was not hemmed in by a parcel of grocers' and linen-drapers' shops, and the space inside the iron railing laid out into walks, &c. This remark, which I have heard repeatedly here, is generally concluded by an allusion to the spacious and magnificent area of St. Peter's at Rome.

of these, silk and satins, together with some manufactured articles, which supply the Malta market, are the principal; the trade of our countrymen consists chiefly in the speculations which are made in the city and interior: the importations are very considerable, and consist of every article either of luxury or convenience: the encouragement given to French produce has very properly excited the dissatisfaction and jealousy of our factory.

Before I leave this part of Sicily, I cannot omit giving you a short account of Monreale, which from its relative situation with the capital can hardly be considered any more than a large suburb. The approach to this town is truly romantic, it being necessary to ascend a road cut with very great difficulty on the side of a hill which rises on the right of the town. This road was made and decorated with fountains and inscriptions by one of the former bishops, Monsignor Testa, a man more remarkable for his patriotism and virtue than for superstitious zeal, and whose name is remembered with the most grateful pleasure by the public. The town of Monreale is very neatly built, and commands one of the most interesting views in Sicily; the scenery which I have attempted to describe, is seen from this place with a thousand additional charms, and I believe there is no Englishman, however insensible, who has visited this town on his way to a famous convent of the Benedictines, called St. Martino,

near it and very beautifully situated, who will not willingly bear testimony to the charms of this fine prospect.

The cathedral of Monreale has long been a great source of admiration to those who have seen it, and really I do not think the true gothic style could be more happily realized than in this venerable pile, reared by the pious and unaffected zeal of William the Good in the twelfth century. This temple is very spacious, and the roof is supported by high pillars which, together with the walls being every where covered with mosaic in the style of those days, representing some scriptural action, produce a very fine effect; the other ornaments are composed of several fine statues, porphyry pillars, vases, &c. This edifice has suffered considerably from a late fire, but having no less than sixty fiefs in its possession, and very large funds, the friars have lost no time in making the necessary preparations for replacing the damage done, which amounts to the sum of 200,000 Spanish dollars. The traveller who visits the adjoining convent will be surprized and astonished, that instead of that simplicity which should adorn the humble followers of Christ, he enters a superb palace, bearing all the marks of vitiated refinement and superfluous luxury.

One of the most celebrated chef d'œuvres of Pietro Novelli, who was a native of Monreale, is seen on the staircase of this convent; it represents St. Benedetto, the tutelar saint, preaching

the gospel; the figures are as large as life, and the whole composition is universally admired for strength of design and beautiful execution. Another has been painted by Mr. Velasquez for the opposite side, of the same size, but although not without great merit, compared to the other it is like "Hyperion to a Satyr." During the conflagration, the famous and splendid tombs of Rugiero, and William, were so exposed that it was necessary to remove the bodies of these revered monarchs. That of William was, however, unavoidably seen by the mob, and excited the utmost astonishment amongst the Sicilians, owing to the high state of preservation in which it was found; having all the appearance of a corpse that had only been interred for a few years. This circumstance would have created surprize in a less credulous people; and when the remains of a virtuous prince are thus preserved for a period of nearly five hundred years, there are few who would not feel a pleasure in attributing it to supernatural agency. William's hair is now considered one of the most precious relics in Palermo. The bodies are deposited in the cathedral.

There is no part of Sicily, in the vicinity of which, so few remains of its former splendour are seen than Palermo. It is said that the remains of an amphitheatre were destroyed in the sixteenth century by order of a viceroy who wished to enlarge the royal palace, and I visited a place called *Mare Dolu*, which is about a mile and a half

south of the town, for the purpose of examining a spot, said to have been once the site of Naumachia. There are evidently the remains of a considerable lake; nearly a mile in circumference, with a rising ground in the centre, supposed to have been an island upon which the soldiers used to disembark for the land combat. I have some hesitation in asserting that this can be placed amongst the antique remains of Palermo, from the circumstance of some people having stated it to be only the remains of a fish pond. Be this as it may, there are, even now, several hundred feet of a wall which surrounded it and remains of some arches toward the sea, which, I am convinced must have conveyed water to it. The further elucidation of this point would be extremely interesting, as if its antiquity is proved, it would serve better than any other monument to give an idea of Palermo's population and magnificence, for it occupies by far the largest space of any other in Sicily. Several baths and sepulchres found near the spot encourage a belief that the town formerly extended to that place.

Several curious inscriptions preserved in the senatorial palace, prove the existence of a famous amphitheatre; but the renowned temples of Jupiter and Hercules, are only known to have existed by the discovery of some medals, upon which they were represented. The great depth of soil and frequency of inundation in the Vale of Palermo,

must have always been great obstacles to the preservation of ancient remains.

Having thus far attempted to give you some idea of the metropolis, I shall beg the favour of your accompanying me in a succeeding letter, in which I propose describing the coast towards Messina.

LETTER III.

———Quoties Cyclopum effervere in agris
Videmus undantem ruptis fornacibus Ætnam,
Flammarumque globos, liquefacta volvere saxa!
Armorum sonitum toto Germania cœlo
Audiit: insolitis tremuerunt motibus Alpes.

VIRGIL, *Geor.* lib. i.

Route along the Northern Coast—Bagaria—Termini—Racella—Himera—Cefalu—Castello de Tousa—Alesa—St. Stefano—Caronia—Forest—St. Agatha—St. Marco—Cape Orlando—Brolo—Patti—Scala de Tindaris—Antiquities—Milazzo—Mountains of Pelorus—Strait of Messina—Faro, and its Wine—Messina—Historical Notices—Population—Public Buildings—Convents—Churches—Port—Commerce—Supplies of Corn—Theatres—Society—Coast towards the Southward—Scaletta—Tauromenium, and Antiquities—Prospect of Mount Etna.

Sicily, 1811.

AFTER leaving the capital, on your road to Messina, the first object that attracts your notice

is the Bagaria, twelve miles from Palermo; you are led to this scene of Sicilian recreation by an uncommonly fine carriage road, ornamented on every side with villages and country seats. The Bagaria is a large space of ground near the sea, and covered with a great number of superb edifices, which have by no means an appearance of that rural simplicity so much admired in England. Those of his Serene Majesty, Prince Butera, and the Palace of Monsters, which has commemorated the folly of Prince Palagonia, are particularly conspicuous; but the picturesque beauty of this agreeable spot is considerably diminished by a want of trees. Near the Bagaria is the well known tunny fishery, which has been such a source of profitable speculation to the king; who visits that place in the summer months for the laudable purpose of combining profit and pleasure. The road from the Bagaria, twelve miles in length, is extremely good to Termini, and, which may be considered as a real wonder in Sicily, you cross a fine bridge built in 1713, over the river St. Lenardo, in going to that town. At Termini you look in vain for the grandeur and magnificence of Himera, the birth-place of Stesicorus, and said to be destroyed by Hannibal, the Carthaginian general, four hundred and nine years before Christ, who put all the inhabitants to the sword, to be revenged for the death of his grandfather, who was before slain and defeated by Gelone, (Hiero,) of Syracuse, near the same place.

The town, containing 20,000 inhabitants, has a wall round it, and is very agreeably situated, with a well cultivated and productive country in its vicinity; and is protected towards the sea by a strong castle, which renders this place a very important military position, with regard to the capital. The mineral hot springs of this town have long been justly celebrated for their efficacy in cases of rheumatism, and chronic diseases; they are much frequented from Palermo, but, as usual, there is very little attention paid to them, and scarcely any accommodation for the reception of visitors. The public establishments here, consist of a *Monte di Pieta*, two hospitals, a poor house for females, several convents for men and women, together with some richly ornamented churches.

A royal caricaturi is established at Termini for the export of corn, oil, olives, and other productions. There is also a very large fishery established here, whose produce, when salted, furnishes the market of Palermo. The only remains of antiquity are some walls, and an aqueduct under ground that appears to have brought water from a great distance, for the supply of the ancient city.

Leaving this place, you have no longer the advantage of a regular road, and are at liberty either to pursue your way eastward by the sea shore, or take the heights which lead by Mount Euraco, cultivated to the top, over an uneven

country, as far as Racella, the little village noticed so particularly in treating of the climate of Sicily. Within a mile of this place the ancient river Himera, now Fiume Grande, is considered as one of the greatest obstacles to travellers, it being extremely difficult to pass during the winter months, for there is no bridge, and the stream is both deep and wide. From the banks of the river the country to Cefalu, fifteen miles further, is extremely flat, and in some parts well cultivated with corn, rice, and hemp.

Cefalu, the ancient *Cephalidis*, and founded by the Sicanians, is a very neat town, the see of a bishop, and contains 10,000 inhabitants. A high mount, under which this place is built, renders Cefalu one of the most formidable military positions in Sicily: it seems to have been a favourite spot with the Saracens, as a strong castle is built in the centre, and the whole circumference is surrounded with a wall and towers; this place would certainly be impregnable if properly fortified. There are here several convents for both sexes, an hospital, and free school: the exports consist of wine, oil, and manna; the latter in very considerable quantities. There is within six miles of the town, and towards the interior, a large forest, called Jebbel Manna, from which a great quantity of ship timber has been cut, for the use of the Sicilian navy; it consists chiefly of fine oak of a tolerably large quality. The sea about Cefalu abounds in fish of every kind.

From this town a most wretched road,* or rather pathway, takes you to Castello di Tousa, eighteen miles distant: on going there you pass a large town, (Mistretta,) with a population of 7,000 souls, eight miles in the interior. Within six miles of Tousa there is another large river, the Pallina, (near the town of that name, and very romantically situated upon the pinnacle of a high hill,) upon which are seen the remains of a superb bridge. The difficulties attending the passage of this river in the winter are truly unpleasant; one day's hard rain being sufficient to detain a passenger for more than a week: and there are yearly many unfortunate persons drowned, in attempting to pass it when swollen. There is not, besides, any precaution whatever on the part of the Sicilian government, to prevent accidents of this kind, as in other countries, where people are kept for that purpose; the same may be applied to all the *Fiumaras* of Sicily. It is needless to dwell on the fatal effects which they have on interior commerce and improvement.

Tousa is a small town built on a very high hill, with 5,000 inhabitants, and is remarkable for the goodness of its wine and oil, both of which are

* The parliament have repeatedly proposed, in messages addressed to his Sicilian Majesty, that moles should be constructed at Cefalu, and other places; also pointed out the necessity of making the roads better: the convicts have been recommended to be employed on this service.—*Par. Proceedings, 9th July, 1774.*

exported in large quantities. A castle on the sea side defends some extensive magazines established here. The ruins of Alesa are not more than a mile from this place, and prove that city to have been very considerable. Many valuable antiquities have been found at Alesa, and from all the indications I saw there, it appears to be a most eligible spot for successfully excavating.* Having succeeded in crossing three Fiumaras, which intercept you here, the town of St. Stefano is the first place of rest: this is a little place well situated, and regularly built; the inhabitants, 3,000 in number, are subject to *Mal Aria*, supposed to proceed from the bed of a Fiumara, close under the town; but this only continues for a short time in August, and is not very severely felt. St. Stefano has in its appearance an abundant share of that misery so profusely found in Sicily. I was much struck while there, at seeing a marble statue on a large pedestal; before I came near this conspicuous object, I thought it was meant to represent a Roman Emperor, and

* Many coins, sepulchral urns, and bronzes, continue to be found there daily; a consular statue has also been dug up here, and is now in the Senate House of Tousa. This place was founded in the time of Dionysius, tyrant of Syracuse, by the Sicelians, and governed by its own laws. Arrived to a considerable degree of opulence, the Romans made it a free city, exempting the Alesians from all taxes. I could discover no traces of its celebrated temples of Apollo, Bacchus, and Adrian. Alesa was built on the banks of the Alæsus, now *Fiume Pettineo*.

consequently prepared myself to pronounce a blessing on the emblem of a Titus or a Marcus Aurelius. The deception was, however, soon removed, and a peasant informed me that it was the statue of Ferdinand III., and he added, that his Majesty having passed through the village in a tour which he some years ago made through the island, the rector of this place, together with a few of his dependants, got the statue erected at the expense of the inhabitants; the rector's assiduity was soon rewarded by a bishopric! This poor man concluded by observing, with that sweet simplicity only to be found amongst the lower order of peasantry, that if the statue was animated, it would not have remained there for so many years, and listen, unmoved, to the complaints of an oppressed and ill-fated people! There are at this place nine churches and four convents; hemp is cultivated near it.

Leaving Stefano you are under the necessity of finding your way twelve miles further on to Caronia, over a rough beach, interrupted occasionally by a digression of pathways through very high brush-wood, which renders travelling here extremely irksome. In the immediate vicinity of Caronia, and before you arrive there, another river must be forded; this runs with great violence during the winter, but there is a bridge thrown across it, about four miles from the sea; it should, however, be observed here, that in

order to arrive at the bridge, you must travel eight miles over a mountainous country, where there is no vestige of a road. The deep valley formed by the *Fiumara* is sometimes interrupted by a promontory; whilst white cliffs, together with a profusion of wood and several cottages scattered about, produce a very fine effect of scenery here; to me its beauty was considerably heightened by having visited the place during a storm, and when the river had swelled to an unusual degree.

Caronia is a small town on the top of a lofty hill, and protected by a very strong castle, which is now out of repair; the ancient Calato is supposed to have stood near this. The forest which derives its name from this town, is one of most importance, and by far the largest in Sicily, extending fourteen miles in length, and in some places six in breadth. Large quantities of timber are annually cut here: it consists of oak, ash, pine, and elm, of an excellent quality, but the total want of roads renders its conveyance to the sea both difficult and expensive, as the large timber is only found towards the interior of the wood; that which grows near the sea is employed to make charcoal, the principal fuel of Sicily, and serves to supply the greatest part of the island. As the forests are public property, and their administration vested in the hands of persons appointed by the Sicilian government, it would be of the utmost consequence to our interests, if

such appointments were made with more regard to propriety. At present, abuses not only detrimental to the people of Sicily, but to its government, are encouraged, by the partial manner in which all the forest laws are administered. From this quarter I know that very considerable supplies might have long since been obtained for the service of our naval arsenals, particularly to assist in the construction of smaller vessels. It is not too late to avail ourselves of so signal an advantage, enhanced as it is, by the political state of affairs which precludes the importation of this article from other places. The pathway from Caronia leads you to a village called St. Agatha, defended by a fort, without guns, and situated in a plain country: five miles from this place there is a large town, St. Marco, containing a population of 3,000 souls, and built on an eminence; this place is remarkable for purity of air, and is thought to be built on the ruins of Agathyrsus, one of the cities founded by Æneas; also celebrated for having been persecuted by Verres. The neighbouring country is extremely productive in corn, olives, and wine.

The large Fiumara of Rosa Marina, upon which the ruins of a fine Roman bridge are seen, is close to St. Agatha, and is another formidable obstacle to the Sicilian tourist, being one of the most considerable in the island. From this place a more even country, along the coast, enables you to travel with some pleasure to Cape Orlando, a

promontory upon which there is a castle.* Here all the horrors of travelling in Sicily overtake you; and after traversing a range of mountains on a miserable road, you reach the Diocese of Patti, most agreeably situated in the centre of an extensive valley, extremely productive, and highly cultivated. The town is built on a hill, and contains 5,000 inhabitants; there are few parts of Sicily that exhibit more picturesque beauty than Patti. A fine bay, in which there is a good summer anchorage, is formed by two head-lands. On the left you see the town of Brolo, and the ruins of Tyndaris on the right, while the Lipari Islands, and the Coast of Calabria, give an effect to the scene which must afford a considerable degree of pleasure to all tourists of taste.

Patti is chiefly remarkable for the number of its churches, and rich convents; in one of the former is seen the tomb of Adelaide, mother of the great Ruggiero: the country about it is wonderfully abundant. An earthenware manufacture has been established here, which supplies nearly all the island at a very cheap rate.

From this town the traveller is led, by a most agreeable ride along a fine beach, to what is called the Scala de Tyndaris. Ascending a mountain covered with olive trees, you arrive in the neigh-

* There is a small village on this road, called Giuosa, from whence large quantities of figs, the best in Sicily, are yearly exported.

bourhood of the once famous Tyndaris; which is too interesting to be passed by without examination. The origin of this city is lost in fabulous tradition, but its subsequent greatness has been handed down by several authors. According to Pliny, a violent earthquake precipitated nearly one half of this town into the sea. The ruins of a large amphitheatre are still visible; and the site of two superb temples, one dedicated to Minerva, and another to Mercury, have also been ascertained. Tyndaris appears to have been a very opulent place. Several colossal statues have been found there; and, prompted by his usual zeal for the fine arts, Mr. Fagan, our consul-general at Palermo, some time ago made excavations near the theatre: a very fine consular statue, together with several interesting fragments, soon rewarded the labour of his laudable undertaking.

The conduct of this city is said to have made it the favorite of several Roman emperors. Like many other places, its riches attracted the rapacity of Verres, and called forth the eloquence of Cicero. The supplies granted to Agrippa, during his dissension with Pompey, and immunities granted to it by Augustus, have all been noticed by the historians of Sicily. Nothing can equal the purity of air, or beauty of situation, enjoyed by those who live here now; they consist, however, only of some monks, who have built a convent on the highest part of the promontory. A very strong pass is formed by the Cape of Tindaro,

and is one amongst the many spots in the island which present every advantage in a military point of view. Descending a most difficult road, the country is seen to extend in a plain more than thirty miles; the view from this spot includes the promontory of Milazzo, and several populous towns.

Directly under the Cape of Tindaro, there is good shelter during the north-west gales so prevalent here in winter; it is much frequented by merchant vessels. The plain of Milazzo has always been remarkable both for the variety and abundance of its productions, but more particularly its wines, so universally esteemed in the Mediterranean. The town contains seven thousand souls, but is irregularly built. The promontory is well fortified, and one of the strongest holds in the island, having been kept possession of for nearly eighteen years, during the war of the succession. Although Milazzo is thought to be of nearly equal antiquity with Messina, there are no remains by which you are led to form any idea of its past greatness. There is a species of public hospital, together with a great number of convents and churches. Since the arrival of the British army, a large garrison has, till very lately, been kept there; which has seemed, in some degree, to alleviate the misery of the inhabitants. There are several towns in its vicinity, particularly Barcelona, Puzzo de Gotto, Castro reale, Santa Lucia, and several others. The exports of Milazzo, and

its neighbourhood, consist chiefly in wine, oil, and olives.

The bay is considered as capable of containing a large fleet; and is well sheltered from northerly and west winds: it is celebrated for a naval action between the fleets of Pompey and Augustus, in which the latter was victorious.

From the plain of Milazzo the mountains of Pelorus rise to a majestic height, and, contrasted with the extensive view below, covered with villages and groves of olive and orange trees, with occasionally a tall spire of some monastery, they render this part of Sicily a scene of the most animated picturesque beauty.

To Messina, thirty miles from Milazzo, there is a very bad road; the views, however, on one side towards Milazzo, and the Lipari Islands, and on the other towards Messina, the Straits, and Calabria, amply compensate the traveller for all other inconveniences.

Coasting from Milazzo, and twelve miles east of it, you pass Cape Bianco, which is only six miles from the celebrated Charybdis, now called the Faro Point, and only two miles and a half from the opposite coast of Calabria. A neat village is built here, inhabited by several hundred fishermen. A very useful work has been just completed here, at a considerable expense, by cutting a channel for the passage of gun-boats and small coasting vessels into a lake on the neck of land which forms the point: this operation has insulated

the Faro, and increased the military strength of that quarter very much, and afforded a safe retreat both to our flotilla and to the numerous fishing boats kept there. A chain of strong batteries, beginning with a very formidable redoubt, have been thrown up at regular distances on to Messina, which is twelve miles off. A new military road, cut by the English army, is supposed to have rendered the coast hereabouts much more formidable than it was before. The Sicilian writers assert that a very extraordinary phenomenon, which has obtained the name of Fata Morgana, is often observed here, and in one or two other parts of Sicily: it consists of the surrounding scenery being transported above the clouds, and seen, as it were through a camera obscura, with the same perspicuity.

Those who have experienced the effects of the tempestuous weather, and violent current so frequent in the Straits of Messina, must cease to be surprized at the fate which befell Æneas's fleet in passing Scylla: our ships of war have, however, become so accustomed to cruize in the vicinity of these famous rocks, that no accident has occurred latterly.*

Upon a subject so well known as the wine of Mamertia, it would be almost superfluous to say any more than that it still continues to be made, in very large quantities, between the Faro

* A tolerably good light-house on the Faro Point serves to guide navigators during the night time.

and Messina. With respect to the qualities which distinguish this famous wine* at present, I cannot believe them to equal those which gave rise to the praises of Cicero and Pliny; but repeated experiments, made by several English merchants at Messina, prove that the Faro wine, when made with a proper degree of care, and kept for three or four years, is fully equal to old port, without creating the serious inconveniences which generally result from an excess in that fascinating beverage;† it is consequently now held in the highest estimation, and used by all the higher ranks of British society in the island. The quantity of it exported yearly seldom amounts to less than 10,000 pipes.

There is no longer the smallest vestige of the temple of Neptune, reported by some to have been on the point of Pelorus; nor could I trace the baths noticed by Mr. Brydone;‡ indeed, the unsparing hand of time seems to have obliterated every trace of that grandeur which, in former days, rendered Messina so conspicuous

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* Quumque feraçissimus vini ager ipse sit, vinum ipsum non quidem Messenium. Sed Mamertinum nuncupant, quod contra Italica cuncta, et quidem præstantissima emulatione certet.—STRABO *Geograph.*, l. vi.

† Epulo Vero in iii. consulatu suo Falernum, Chium, Lesbium, Mamertinum, quo primum tempore quatuor generi vini apposita constat.—PLIN.

‡ This agreeable tourist has superseded the necessity of my giving you an account of the interesting and curious process of taking the Pacha Shada in the Faro.

amongst the other great cities of the island; it is, however, still one of the most important in Sicily, and well worthy of being denominated the rival of Palermo. With a good harbour, an extensive population, and fine climate, this city possesses all those advantages which will always insure the admiration of strangers.

The Sicoli, a people who are said to have come from Calabria, were doubtless the first who settled there; and after them, the importance of its situation must have naturally made Messina a well grounded source of contention with the numerous adventurers who, in the remote ages of antiquity, were continually in search of new colonies. We are consequently informed that, five hundred years before the siege of Troy, a colony of them founded Messina, which was then called Zanclea, from one of its founders; and that after that memorable event, they were joined by another from Mycene, the capital of Agamemnon, from which its present name is derived. The Calchidians are also said to have supplied this part of the island with a portion of its inhabitants. This town is, however, chiefly remarkable for having been the place where hostilities first broke out between the Romans and Carthaginians, and which led to such sanguinary wars afterwards. The arrival of Appius Claudius, two hundred and sixty-four years before the Christian æra, when the inhabitants implored the assistance of Rome against their oppressors, is one of the most important events in the history of the island. After

its first occupation, Messina continued to flourish under the Roman power, while Sicily remained colonized by that nation. In more modern times it has been looked up to as the second city in the island, and as its chief commercial emporium. Two most melancholy disasters have befallen the Messinese, and prevented their arrival at that degree of population and opulence which would have otherwise rewarded their industry and happy turn for commercial pursuits. The first of these was the memorable plague of 1743, which carried off more than thirty-five thousand souls, and for many years suspended the operations of trade. The last event did not destroy more than a few hundred lives, but produced effects which have not been yet removed: this was the dreadful earthquake of 1783, which overturned nearly all this town, and occasioned the total destruction of so many others in Calabria. Several immunities have been granted to the inhabitants in consequence of their misfortunes: amongst others, that of being exempted from the payment of any taxes, for the period of twenty-five years, and its being constituted a free port, are the most important.

According to the enumeration of 1798, the population of Messina did not exceed 45,000; so that you will be enabled to form some idea of its rapid progress towards improvement, when informed, that it is now supposed to be nearly 90,000: this can only be attributed to what I have already stated relative to the island's popu-

lation in general: an increased commerce, and the necessity which has driven so many families from agricultural pursuits, whilst the English head-quarters having been established there until lately, may also be considered as extremely favourable to the increase of inhabitants.

The town is very regularly built, and consists of two long streets, the Via de Nuova, and St. Ferdinan, which are intersected at right angles, in different places.

The public establishments principally consist of about thirty large convents for both sexes, one hospital, four libraries, four seminaries for the education of youth, six asylums for the poor, two houses of correction for women, and two *Montes di Pieta*. To give a minute description of the manner in which the hospital and poor houses of Messina are administered, would only be to repeat what I had occasion to say of similar institutions in Palermo; in fact, those who have seen them there may, without hesitation, form an exact idea of what they are in every part of the island. The hospital is a very fine building, and capable of containing several hundred patients, it is supported by the produce of some very considerable foundations in lands and houses, and administered by a deputation of several noblemen: those who perform the executive duties of this important establishment are very ill paid; and, from what I could collect when on the spot, I was led to believe that abuses of the most serious description

must exist, there being very few patients, and those but wretchedly served.

The house for the reception of foundlings and orphans is sustained here, under the same disadvantages which affect the Grand Hospital at Palermo; and is altogether inadequate to the useful purposes which it was intended to promote, being very deficient both in attendants and comfort.

A visit to the public prison, a very fine structure, and in one of the most conspicuous streets, was productive of very little gratification, as far as related to the manner of its being conducted. Prisoners of every description are mixed together in the most promiscuous manner; and there being no separate place for the reception of women, they are often immured in a part of this one; a custom contrary to every rule of propriety. Although the prison is spacious, and infinitely better ventilated than that of Palermo, it is equally filthy, and the rules of cleanliness are equally disregarded.

The *Montes di Pieta* are founded on principles similar to those of the capital, and are of the utmost benefit to the community, although by no means exempt from the abuses complained of in those of Palermo.* While at Messina, I was particu-

* The libraries of Messina are, with the exception of those of the university and senate, scarcely worth mentioning; they are, it is true, open to the public, but under such ridiculous restrictions, that no one who is desirous of undertaking a course of reading can avail himself, in any manner, of the advantages to be antici-

larly struck by the appearance of its former magnificent Marina and several public buildings, which are now but very little taken care of; for the Marina was, previous to the earthquake, one of the most superb ranges of palaces in Sicily. Beginning at the southern extremity of the port, it reached for more than a mile along the water side; from this there were eighteen gate-ways, or entrances, into the respective streets which cross the city at right angles, and over each were appropriate sculptured designs and inscriptions. These pleasing ornaments are now in a fair way of being restored, as during the last three years several new houses have replaced the ruins of the former. In rebuilding the Marina, more regard has been shewn to useful solidity than to elegance of design. This and all other buildings, whether of a public or private nature, are, by a very wise rule, superintended by the senate, which prevents a thousand inconveniences to individuals, and has the additional effect of preserving a regularity of building, also observable in Catania, where the same rule is strictly adhered to.

The convents of Messina are in general very large, and richly ornamented with all the symbols

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pated from such an undertaking: a week seldom passes without being interrupted by two or three holidays or festas; on these occasions and Sundays all the libraries are shut; and when open, it is necessary to read ecclesiastical books, lest the charge of irreligion should be incurred; add to which, there are no modern works of any use to be found in them.

of the Catholic faith. Amongst the churches, which amount to about fifty, there are many very superb ones: the pictures found in them are chiefly from the pencils of the Messinian painters; among whom, the names of Rasaliba, Alibrandi, and Franco, are very conspicuous: Polidoro and Michael Angelo Caravaggio have also left several very valuable pictures in this town. To the former's school, which he established at Messina in the 16th century, is attributed the introduction of good taste in the fine arts; since his time, many very respectable artists have been produced there.

The cathedral is much admired for a fine Gothic front, and for the granite pillar which supports the roof, supposed to have been taken from the ruins of the Temple of Neptune; in other respects, the interior and general character of this edifice did not equal my expectations. Directly opposite to it there is a fountain on a plan similar to that at Palermo, but much smaller; there are a number of marble statues surrounding it, which have the merit of being better executed than those at Palermo. This public-spirited work has ever been remarked for the elegance of its design and execution, and is said to have been highly approved of by the great Michael Angelo Buonarotti. Near this, there is an equestrian bronze statue of Charles III.

The royal palace and senate-house are two very fine buildings. Few statues worth mentioning are to be seen here; there are a great many, however, which are thought, from their contemptible

mode of execution to be a disgrace to the city; such are the Neptune on the Marina, and the water gods which are under it, together with some others in different parts of the town.

The port of Messina, which the poets feign to have been formed by the shield of Saturn when that deity was precipitated from Olympus, is very generally admired; yet, though calculated to receive several line of battle ships, the extreme depth of water all over it, sometimes exceeding forty fathoms, renders it much less convenient than it would otherwise be. On the neck of land which forms the harbour there is a citadel, built by order of Charles II., in 1679, and considered to be the strongest place of arms in Sicily, with bomb proofs for 5000 men; this is, of course, our chief barrier against the approach of an enemy, and serves both as a good garrison and useful depôt. On the land side the city is defended by two forts, Gonzago and Matagrifone, neither of which are remarkable for their strength or utility.

A very extensive commerce has both enlivened and enriched the natives of Messina during the last five years; and a number of British merchants, captivated with the hope of success, as well as of the friendly reception which they naturally anticipated from the Sicilian government, have formed a respectable factory there; however, the wishes of very few have been as yet realized. I have great reason to believe there is not one amongst them who does not regret the necessity

under which he was of speculating in a country, where not only the marked injustice of the government and constituted authorities, but the want of good faith in many of the trading inhabitants have so powerfully contributed to disappoint his expectations.

I have observed that Messina has long been denominated a free port, but did not then mean to say that it can be considered as one by us; for the ill usage and numerous impositions experienced by English mercantile people settled there, prove that title to be nothing but a mere name. All the staple commodities of the island are shipped at this port; the imports consist chiefly of British manufactured goods and colonial produce.

There is no populace in Sicily more dissatisfied with its local administration than the Messinese, and I believe none with more reason: the respective civil officers and deputations which superintend the public establishments are not less than 300; sufficient, one would imagine, to administer the affairs of a kingdom. This amazing superfluity of officers is one of the most serious evils in the island; it has the effect of absorbing every shadow of civil liberty in the people, and, in a great measure, the funds over which they are destined to preside.

The judicial privileges of this city are no less extensive than many others with which it is endowed. A criminal court is established independent of that in Palermo, and presided at by the

civil and military governors. To obtain any thing in the shape of prompt justice here is out of the question; an immense number of litigants are consequently always detained in it, for the purpose of supporting a long-established system of procrastination and imposition.

The senate and its officers consist of fifteen members; these are entrusted with supplying the inhabitants with corn and oil, at a moderate price, as in Palermo and the other towns; they also superintend the internal police. Amongst the many instances daily complained of in the management of the first important trust, which is of such consequence to the inhabitants, the following is related as having occurred some time ago:—During a scarcity, while on the southern coast of the island, and even at Messina, people were sending corn off the island for six and seven ounces the salm, the senate, who had neglected to provide a proper quantity in time, were purchasing an inferior quality from Greek ships at the advanced price of ten!

As the sole object of the different universitas is to prevent imposition, and anticipate the effects of scarcity, or rather to prevent it, how extremely absurd it is to suppose that the manner in which they have lately been conducted can be of the least public utility, whilst they are such a weighty charge to the people?

Silk-worms have for several centuries been very successfully propagated in the vicinity of Messina,

and their produce may be placed amongst the first sources of its opulence: there are several extensive manufactories of that article here, and during a time of peace it forms a very large portion of their export to the Levant and other places.

There are dependent on Messina forty-eight villages, which surround it in different directions, and are governed by the same laws; that of Cartessa is a very delightful spot, four miles south of the city. The country is every where highly cultivated; and the range of mountains rising behind the town form a great variety of agreeable walks, which are very much frequented.

Little can be said for the amusements of this town; and the theatre is in every respect unworthy of so large a population. The usual resource of a faro table is the only place to which a fashionable Sicilian thinks of going. Amongst the English residents a considerable degree of social intercourse prevails, and some have shewn an example in this way very rarely followed. Here I cannot help observing how much we ought to regret those illiberal prejudices and little jealousies, which never fail to divide nearly all our foreign and mercantile establishments. Those, who encourage this disgraceful practice, ought to consider, that both their own particular interests and those of the public must suffer most materially from indulging feelings so contrary to every rule of good sense and decorum. I may add, that if any set of people wished to be thought contemptible amongst

foreigners, no method could possibly be adopted more calculated to produce that effect, than the divisions which have unhappily prevailed in this island amongst commercial men, and generally upon points of insignificant etiquette.

Leaving Messina, the coast southward, towards Catania, assumes all those charms of a diversified landscape, which must interest every traveller. Nothing can be finer than the scenery about this part of Sicily, more particularly as seen from the heights immediately over the former city. The Faro appears like a lake unconnected with the sea, innumerable boats plays on its surface, whilst Pelorus in the distance, and Reggio, together with the hills of Calabria opposite, would be a subject for the most finished artist to copy from.

The roads on this part of the island are equally neglected with the others, but a fine beach supersedes the necessity of one in some measure for several miles out of Messina. The first town south of that place is Scaletta, built on the sea side, and containing about 1000 inhabitants, who live by agriculture and fishing; twelve miles further you ascend the hill upon which the celebrated Tauromenium stood, now only known by the beautiful and superb remains of what it was in the time of Dionysius and Augustus. The number of inhabitants at present does not exceed 3,500. The amphitheatre, naumachia, cisterns, and aqueduct, still seen here, are objects of well-deserved admiration to travellers, and bear ample testimony to its former

splendour. The important part which the people of this city took in all the wars, conducted for the restoration of Sicilian liberty when usurped by the tyrants of Syracuse, give it a very conspicuous place in the history of the island. The town is now only remarkable for the number of its convents and churches. An English detachment is usually kept there, it being a very strong military position. On the top of a high rock which appears to overhang the town, a village called Mola is built. This place has long been the wonder of strangers, from the singularity of its position. From the amphitheatre of Taurmina which is very finely situated, Etna and the surrounding country are seen with peculiar advantage. The talents of Captain Pym, of the royal artillery, have done great justice to this sublime landscape, in an inimitable drawing which he made on the spot, and presented to the late commander-in-chief, Sir J. Stuart. It is much to be regretted that the pencil of this gentleman has not been employed to delineate several other views in Sicily, which, should they occupy the attention of any future amateur, who may be disposed to communicate his labours to the public, cannot fail becoming a valuable acquisition to the lovers of picturesque beauty in England. Descending with the greatest difficulty the road which leads from Taurmina, you soon arrive on the base of Mount Etna, that justly celebrated wonder of the world.

Being incapable of doing any justice to the complicated and sublime prospect enjoyed by those who ascend the mountain, you will, I hope, excuse the following quotation from the Abate Ferrara's work, in which he does ample justice to the scene below:—"Il filosofo guardando da questa sommita puo esseri occupato da idee di un al trageneri esso fissa la sua reflessione sopra la grande Isola che e sotto i suoi piedi; la patria delle favole; l'abitazione degli antichissimi Ciclopi; il soggiorno delle piu grande nazione della terra, tanti guerre tanti memorabili avvenimente, la culla de tante belle invenzione; dove fiorirono tanto le scienze e le belle arti; dove tante superbi Tempj furono elevati alla maesta degli Dei della mani di immortale artifici; la patria di Cerere; l'Isola del Sole; la terra della fecondita; il Granajo del Popolo Romano, e del Italia!"

I cannot on this occasion refrain from subjoining descriptions of this celebrated mountain, from the pens of two such poetical luminaries as Virgil and Milton, who seem to vie with each other, in doing justice to the grandeur of their subject.

——"Horrifices, tonat Ætna ruinis,
Interdumque atram prorumpit ad æthera nubem
Turbine fumantem piceo et candente favilla,
Attollitque globos flammarum, et sidera lambit:
Interdum scopulos avulsaque viscera montis
Erigit eructans, liquefactaque saxa sub auras
Cum gemitu glomerat, fundoque exhæstuat imo."

——"As when the force
Of subterranean wind transports a hill
Torn from Pelorus, or the shatter'd side
Of thund'ring Ætna, whose combustible
And fuel'd entrails thence conceiving fire,
Sublimed with mineral fury, aid the winds,
And leave a singed bottom all involved
With stench and smoke."

Par. Lost, book i, l. 230.

Leaving this romantic vicinity and proceeding close to the sea coast, within twelve miles of Catania, we come to a beautiful town called Aci Reale, formerly Acis Aquileja, after the Roman consul Aquilius, who made it a military station in the first Servilian war. Fiume Freddo joins the sea here. This is the stream, on the banks of which, Acis and Galatea are supposed by the poets to have been enamoured of each other. Aci Reale is very delightfully situated, and contains a population of 15,000 souls; it is remarkable for the regularity of the streets, and purity of atmosphere. There are large quantities of wine and fruits exported yearly from this town. A considerable fair is held there in July. Bleaching has also been carried to great perfection there. Several churches and about ten convents form the other establishments of this town.

Between Taurmina and Aci Reale, there is a small town called Mascoli, from whence large quantities of red wine are exported to Malta and various other places.

LETTER IV.

Prima Syracosio dignata est ludere versu
Nostra, neque erubuit silvas habitare Thalia.
VIRGIL, *Eclog.* vi.

Catania—Its Superiority to the other Towns of Sicily — Antiquarian Notices — University — Convents — Hospitals—Prisons — Architecture —Port—Military Defences—Commerce—Laws —Agriculture—State of Manners—Museum, &c.—Augusta, its Description—Antiquities— Syracuse—Present State—Public Buildings— Wines, Oil, and other Produce—Fisheries— Fortifications—Antiques—Coast to Cape Passaro, with Avola, Noto, &c.—Tunny Fishery, &c. &c.

Sicily, 1811.

CATANIA has been so often described, that an attempt to give you some idea of its present situation, must contain a great deal of repetition. I should, however, deprive myself of a most pleasing task, were I to pass with indifference by a place so distinguished as this town has ever been, for the marked superiority of its inhabitants, and the extreme beauty of situation over other places in Sicily. Catania has been very justly

styled the Athens of this island, and in historical renown, is only exceeded by that of Syracuse. This city is supposed to have been founded by the Sicoli; a colony of Phœnicians settled here afterwards; and when the people of Colchis visited the island, numbers of them were conducted under Evarchus to this fascinating region, which soon became one of the most flourishing Grecian cities in the island. The great Hiero of Syracuse succeeded in subjugating it, and changed its name to that of Etneo; but after repeated struggles, the inhabitants were liberated by the victorious arms of Timoleon, and continued to be governed by their own laws, until the arrival of Messala, the Roman consul, who subjected it to the yoke of that nation. There is scarcely any event connected with Sicilian history, in which the inhabitants of this city have not borne a very conspicuous part.

The Gymnasium established here by Marcellus, has been much spoken of by subsequent historians, who dwell with great praise on the particular patronage extended towards the Catanese by that great general.

Destroyed three times by the lava of Etna, Catania appears like the phœnix to have risen more splendidly from its ashes, and is now considered as one of the best built cities in Europe. The numerous remains of antiquity, and uncommon scale upon which they seem to have been constructed, convey a very high idea of what this

place was in former times; indeed, there is no part of Sicily in which the traveller meets with so many objects calculated to excite his attention. The amphitheatres, naumachia, circus, odeum, and baths, are still in good preservation; and the great number of medals and statues hitherto found in the town, and its vicinity, prove Catania to have been one of the first seats of the fine arts in the island. The unexampled purity of climate enjoyed by the inhabitants of this town is attributed by most people to the vicinity of Ætna; and although its great fertility of soil is supposed by the Abate Ferrara, not to owe its origin to the same cause, yet many are of a contrary opinion; however, a more productive soil is not to be found in the island, and the abundance of this quarter is proverbial. Under these alluring advantages, it has been thought extremely preposterous, that English travellers, but more particularly valetudinarians, should still continue to make a rule of living at Palermo, while this town holds out so many additional charms, both as to its society, climate, and means of living.

Catania is situated close to the sea shore; it consists of two very long and spacious streets, which are intersected at right angles by several others, and give an appearance of great regularity to the whole. The inhabitants have experienced a very considerable increase during late years; and although in 1798 their number did not exceed 55,000, they are now said to be at

least 80,000, being an increase of nearly two-thirds since 1770, a period of only forty-two years.* This rapid addition furnishes matter of the most interesting reflection, and proves how admirably calculated this place is for improvement: for if under such serious civil and political abuses, an advancement like the above could be made in the greatest source of opulence, what would it have been if blest with the advantages of rational liberty and good laws?

The university of Catania, from its antiquity, deserves to be noticed first in the list of public institutions. It is a sumptuous edifice, and was founded by the beneficent Alphonso of Arragon, and endowed with very extensive privileges. There are professors appointed for all the sciences and liberal arts; and with the exception of that extreme facility with which people are said to procure the respective degrees here, I am led to believe, that no establishment for public education has ever been so well conducted as this.

* It is extremely singular how the Abate Balsamo, has managed to reduce the population of this city to 45,000. The following notes its comparative number of inhabitants during the last and present centuries, and may serve to give some idea of Catania's progressive prosperity.

In 1500	4,007	families
— 1595	25,000	souls
— 1653	11,340	—
— 1713	16,000	—
— 1770	25,715	—

It continues to be resorted to from all parts of the island, and although that freedom of discussion, and the benefit of an unshackled press, by which an university can be alone capable of making any very great advancement in learning, are wanting, yet there are many young men within the walls, who, it is expected, will ere long become the ornaments of their country. The expense attending an introduction into this seminary is comparatively trifling, and there are accommodations for at least 500 students. A good classical library is attached to it. The hall of examination is extremely elegant. The privilege of giving degrees is only enjoyed by this university. There are, independent of the above, several private seminaries. There are nineteen convents for men, and eleven for women; a *Monte di Pieta*, foundling hospital, poor house, and asylum; to which might be added, forty-nine churches and places of public worship. Of the convents there are six appropriated for the reception of nobles, all richly endowed; the Benedictines are amongst the most opulent, and both their church and convent have long excited the wonder of travellers. The result of my inquiries relative to the mode of administering the hospitals, and other institutions connected with the public good, were attended with infinitely more satisfaction than I experienced in the same pursuit at any other part of the island: they are not, however, exempted by any means from many of the abuses practised in Palermo

and Messina, but an appearance of greater regularity is every where evident. The public prison may be considered as an exception to the qualified praises which I have felt it but just to bestow on the other institutions; this is very badly kept, and from the mode of conducting it, neither calculated to fulfil the ends of justice, or of law.

All the public and private edifices of this fine town possess an air of magnificence unknown to any other part of the island, and the taste with which many of the noblemen's houses are decorated, shows great judgment. The senate house is a model of fine building; the cathedral, founded by the great Ruggiero, is also very much admired for the simplicity and grandeur of its design, which places it on a level with the most splendid in the island. A mole has been constructed here, but is only calculated for the reception of small vessels; this is much to be regretted, in a place so capable of becoming a great commercial emporium, and where the abundance of materials and other facilities, would render the formation of a larger one so very easy.*

The natural position of Catania is by no means

* Catania Bay, although one of the largest in the island, is only frequented by vessels that load there occasionally. The anchorage outside the mole is extremely good, but exposed to the easterly winds in winter, which render it very unsafe at that season. The abundance of fish found all along the coast gives employment to several hundred persons.

strong, and the fortifications are no longer worth mentioning. There are only a few vestiges of its former works which were very formidable; indeed, they have all the evidences of having been uncommonly well constructed. The land side is entirely unprotected, but there are several situations on which works may be constructed. The lava found in such quantities about Catania, possesses a number of admirable qualities that render it highly useful for a variety of purposes, but more particularly those of building and paving. The solidity of this production is truly surprizing, and has been found to exceed any other fossil. The ancient walls lately discovered in the town, appear as if erected only a few days.

The commerce of this city has been very considerable during the present war, and the commissariat has derived large supplies of cattle from the neighbouring country. The exports consist chiefly of wheat, barley, sulphur, wine, oil, soda, pistachio nuts, and manna, besides many other small articles. Few, if any, British merchants have settled there, owing to the superior advantages held out to them by the harbour of Messina. In a more prosperous state of affairs Catania will, doubtless, increase in commercial importance. The silk has been brought to a degree of perfection equal, if not superior, to that of Palermo, and one of the establishments whence that article is manufactured, is considered as the greatest

curiosity to which travellers are conducted, on their arrival here. The successful cultivation of the worm is so intimately connected with all those hindrances to which agriculture is subjected in Sicily, that it has not failed to suffer its share of diminution; consequently the state of this manufacture is by no means so flourishing as it would have been under different circumstances. It is of the utmost importance that the importation of French silks should receive no encouragement from the new administration, as a very large portion of the population have long been supported by the exercise of their industry in this way.

The privileges of Catania like those of Messina, are very extensive, when compared with all the other towns of Sicily: that of being allowed a civil and criminal court, independent of the grand court at Palermo, would be a source of great benefit to the people, if impartially conducted; but I am confidently informed, that it is administered upon the same ruinous plan. The constituted authorities both of Catania and Messina, were last year shackled with a very singular species of superintendence; this was by the appointment of what is called a *Ministro Togato*, a measure of the most arbitrary description, and which never was resorted to, I believe on any former occasion. It appears that the persons employed, are creatures of the court, and more in the character of spies than any thing else; they have, however, the power of interfering in all the measures of the civil adminis-

tration, and must be a great check upon that public spirit and patriotism, which have in this island unfortunately been considered inimical to the interests of the prince, and are certainly in opposition to that discretionary power with which all corporate bodies are endowed.

As to agriculture, it is more generally understood and successfully practised by the landholders of this town and its vicinity, than any others in the island. The country every where, in the suburbs, is uncommonly fertile and highly cultivated. There are several delightful spots close to the city, laid out with a degree of taste, combining, in the happiest manner, the objects of utility and recreation. The potatoe has been introduced by several proprietors with great success: two abundant crops being annually produced, of a quality equal to any I ever saw in England.

The celebrated plain, which takes its name from the town, is only a few miles off, and is the largest in the island; it is said that this extent of ground has been dreadfully neglected for want of labourers, and of the other means necessary for its cultivation: the plain is about fourteen miles long, and ten in breadth; it is very well supplied with water, and presents an uninterrupted level, without having a single tree on its surface. Experience has proved repeatedly that the corn produced an hundred fold, and sometimes an hundred and twenty. It has often been suggested, how extremely beneficial it would be, to plant some trees on this plain, at proportionate distances;

their effect in enriching the soil, and affording shelter, would be very great.

In closing this short account of Catania, I ought to add, that the state of manners in that town are infinitely superior to what they are in any other part of Sicily: the rules of strict politeness, true hospitality, and social intercourse, are so rigidly attended to, that it would be very unjust not to bestow on them that meed of praise which they so justly merit. While in Palermo, you might imagine yourself in the midst of Carthaginians and Romans, from the low cunning and haughty pride of the people. You are led, on entering Catania, to fancy yourself in the centre of a Grecian colony; and the being received in every society with a degree of attention and respect, seems the result of good education on the part of those who manifest it, and is calculated to render the continuance of strangers highly agreeable here. There is throughout the year an unlimited intercourse, and the most pleasant parties formed, both in the town and country: at these, the utmost decorum and regularity are observed to preside, and instead of that fatal and vitiated disposition to gambling, so prevalent at Palermo and Messina, music and dancing are substituted. The minor accomplishments are no less objects of solicitude with the Catanese, than those of a more solid nature, and you enter into no society in which there is not found very fascinating personal beauty, combined with an elegance of manner and address, rarely to be met with in

any country. There are very few of either sex who are not, at an early age, instructed in music, drawing, and dancing; and the solicitude with which mothers superintend the conduct and education of their daughters, might be held out as a lesson to some other countries.

I was, while at Catania, much pleased with the universal emulation shewn by the higher orders to collect antiques and coins; this is of itself a strong indication of something more than is met with in other places. Independent of several minor collections, those of Prince Biscari, the Benedictines, Baron Recupero, and M. Goeni, are sources of great pleasure and amusement to travellers; the former of these is worthy of a more ample description than I am capable of giving, and I regret that so inestimable a collection, made at an immense expense, by one of the most enlightened antiquarians that Sicily has produced, should not have before now occupied the attention of some of the literati here. The bronzes and marbles are very numerous, and arranged in the best style: the Torso, found some years ago in one of the theatres, is thought to be a chef-dœuvre of Grecian sculpture; it represents the body of a Jupiter Fulminans: there are also several whole length statues, busts, and capitals, together with many valuable inscriptions. The naturalist is equally gratified by a visit to this museum, from the great variety of fossils, minerals, and the things connected with that department of science, with which it is

stocked. It seldom happens that a taste for antiquities continues long in a family; this has been exemplified in the present prince of Biscari, who is, I believe, anxious to dispose of this fine collection, and as a proof of his extreme indifference, it is only necessary to observe, that the coins, which are considered as the most extensive collection in the island, were some time ago, put into a bag, and deposited in a place of safety, not to be again shewn to strangers; the cameos were secured in a similar manner. The collection at the Benedictines also, is very rich in natural curiosities of every kind; and there are some good pictures, a few marbles, and several inscriptions. That of Baron Recupero consists chiefly of coins and cameos, but its value is very much enhanced by the extensive erudition of its owner, who has the additional talent of communicating it, in the handsomest manner, to those who visit his house. The museum of Geoni consists altogether of natural productions, and is very well arranged: like all the others, it is opened gratis to all strangers who visit this town.

The amber of Catania, so celebrated all over Europe, is found on the coast, south of the city, and forms one of its principal sources of wealth; several hundred families are employed in working this curious production, which is exported to the continent and other places in very large quantities.

There are a number of distinguished families which continually reside in Catania, and give it an

air of fashion, not inferior to the capital; there are also several fine promenades in different directions.

It is supposed that from the system of education and their general habits, there are infinitely more literary and political talents to be found there, than at Palermo. I feel happy in having an opportunity of mentioning the names of the Marchese Rehurdoni, San Giuliano, and Chevalier Paterno, amongst those who are thought to be eminently possessed of patriotism and talents: a number of others might be added with equal propriety.

In taking my leave of this city, the scene of so many interesting events, and violent revolutions, it may not be inapplicable to observe, that in every point of view, which relates to the British interests in Sicily, it is of importance to give the utmost encouragement to a city, endowed as Catania is with so many local advantages, and by a conduct altogether different from that which our diplomatists have hitherto adopted, endeavour, with solicitude, to secure the attachment and good opinion of so enlightened a population.

From Catania to Augusta, twenty-seven miles, the difficulties of travelling are considerably diminished by your having to traverse a very even country. The Biviere or lake of Lentini, already noticed, is passed on the right, with the celebrated Urbs Leontinorum, founded by a colony from Colchis, so renowned for its successful opposition to the tyranny of Phalaris and Dionysius, also the birth-place of Georgius the rhetorician and Hero-

dicus, now only remarkable for its poverty and insalubrity.

Agosta, the *Megera Iblea* of antiquity, and now called after Augustus Cæsar, is a strong and well fortified town containing 12,000 inhabitants, and built upon a neck of land, which forms one of the most commodious ports in Sicily. There are scarcely any remains from which a correct judgment can be drawn of its former greatness. The present wretched state of this town, so admirably calculated for every purpose of commerce, is a just source of regret. There are some salt works, that being the principal article of export, which serve to supply the Adriatic. The most experienced mercantile people in the island have often suggested the propriety of establishing a lazaretto here instead of at Messina, for vessels coming either from Barbary or the Levant. Agosta is certainly infinitely better adapted for this, than the above place, both from its local and other advantages, which would render the communication of contagion much more difficult, while the numerous abuses now practised where vessels are obliged to lay for any time in quarantine, must be considerably diminished. Great quantities of sugar cane are annually sown in this neighbourhood. There are in this town a great number of convents and churches; also an hospital very badly administered, and a *Monte di Pieta*. The country about it is very good, though not woody; but a limited

population, together with the usual obstacles, prevent much cultivation.

From Agosta to Syracuse, the distance is seventeen miles; on approaching that town, the country assumes a new and most fascinating appearance. The vale, covered with groves, villages, and farm-houses, stretches fifteen miles to the right, while towards Cape Passaro, the town of Avola, situated on an extensive and well cultivated plain, at least twenty-five miles in length, gives a beautiful effect to the landscape; surrounded with the ruins of temples, amphitheatres, and aqueducts, the port and Ortigia on the left, it is impossible for any person to contemplate such a scene without being agitated with a thousand reflections on the melancholy change which this place, the pride and wonder of antiquity, has experienced.

Those who are desirous of contemplating whatever is great and useful in the study of history, cannot fulfil their object more effectually than by reading that of Syracuse, which for so many ages appears to have shewn a great and glorious example of legislative and political wisdom to surrounding nations. It is, however, no trifling consolation to reflect or know, that the place which gave birth to an Archimedes, a Hiero, and a Diocles, is still endowed with the same local advantages of soil, climate, and situation; although the talents and virtues which distinguished these immortal men are far removed from Sicily.

The present town of Syracuse is built on the peninsula, formerly called Ortigia, and forms one of the finest harbours in the world, capable of containing the largest fleet, and from its situation, depth of water, and facility of getting out, peculiarly adapted for all the purposes of a great naval and commercial station. The population does not exceed 13,500, although some assert that in 1790 it was more than 17,000. The streets and buildings have an appearance of regularity not often met with in Sicily: the position of the town is besides very favorable to cleanliness. There are in this small place no less than twenty convents, and a proportionate number of churches; amongst these the cathedral, formerly the temple of Minerva, is perhaps, one of the most interesting objects in the island. To reflect on the scale and symmetry of this grand structure, erected more than 2,500 years ago, for the offices of religious worship, and still dedicated to the divinity, is a circumstance which must gratify even the most sceptical beholder, if not excite sentiments of piety. The other public establishments consist of a seminary for the education of youth, an hospital conducted like that of Agosta, and a *Monte di Pieta.*

The senate-house and a few private palaces are well worth the tourist's attention here.

No privileges of consequence have been granted of late years to the Syracusans: but they are loaded with all the inconveniences of the most inconsiderable towns in the island, which account sufficiently

for the state of poverty in which they still continue. A great deal might, however, be said about the general character and conduct of those who compose the senate, for a more litigious body is not, I believe, to be found in any part of Sicily. The latter assertion will, doubtless, be confirmed by Mr. Leckie, and his brother-in-law Mr. Denison who has in vain endeavoured for a series of years, to obtain justice from them. Their impositions upon the unfortunate inhabitants, and their uniform obstructions to all commercial enterprize, are subjects that call loudly both for punishment and animadversion. Circumscribed as the commerce of Syracuse has been for so long a period, there are still considerable exports made from it; they consist principally of wines, oil, hemp, nitre, and, during a good season, wheat.

The variety and excellence of the wines made here, have been the theme of praise both with ancient and modern authors: there are no less than ten different sorts made here. The Biblino, so much esteemed by the Romans, is thought to be found in the Muscadel, now made in such quantities at this place; it possesses a quality not unlike that of Malaga, and is very much improved by time: the red and white wines, when made with any degree of care, and kept a proper time, exceed every idea that can be formed of their perfection; a large quantity is yearly exported to Malta and England. The oil of Syracuse is also remarkable for its goodness. The growing of hemp in the

vicinity of this town has been resorted to in consequence of the scarcity of that article since the commencement of the present war. The profits arising from it are so extremely limited, that it is hoped the inhabitants will ere long, recognize the error of thus sacrificing their personal happiness.

Nitre is made within a few hundred yards of the town: that which is not exported, is employed in a powder manufactory established here for the account of the Sicilian government.

Several years have elapsed since any grain has been exported from Syracuse; such indeed have been the usual run of crops since 1800, that large supplies continue to be received there from the southern coast, and the Levant. This year, has been one of the greatest calamity to the inhabitants; they having been obliged to import grain at the enormous price of ten and twelve oz. per salm, two-thirds more than it had ever been before.

Should the fate of Sicily become more closely allied to that of Great Britain, the regeneration and improvement of Syracuse cannot possibly escape the attention of the English government, more particularly as there is no part of the island which might be so easily elevated from a state of the greatest poverty to one of opulence and splendour. As a commercial emporium, the excellence of its port and strong military position, offer every inducement to the merchant; while its vicinity to the Adriatic, Morea, and the Levant may be added as another great advantage. The

necessaries of life are found in great abundance. To the navy, it might be rendered equally useful. A dock may be constructed at a trifling expense.

No fish market in Sicily is better supplied than that of Syracuse; and several tunny fisheries are established about the coast.

The fortifications have been constructed with great care, and are thought to be the best in the island; those towards the land side are remarkable for their beauty, and much admired. An irregular wall and bastions surround the town towards the sea.

Mr. Leckie's work has detailed many of the evils experienced by this part of Sicily, and in so able a manner, that I shall only add the circumstance of his not having in the least exceeded the bounds of strict veracity. Indeed it would be difficult to find language sufficiently strong to describe such an accumulation of abuses as are practised there.

The people of Syracuse are remarkable for their social qualities, and the women celebrated for being in general very handsome. There are, amongst the present inhabitants, several men of talents: the Chevalier Landalina, and Don P. Avalio, are particularly distinguished for their literary attainments, and great perseverance in elucidating the antiquities of their native town. The Chevalier has long been placed at the head of that department in Val Demona and Val de Noto; and in 1810 was fortunate enough to

discover a statue of Venus, which is universally admired for simplicity of design and finished execution; but the head has never yet been found. A museum was lately fitted up for the reception of a great variety of fragments, vases, and lachrimatories: the arrangement of this place is highly ridiculous. Should a regular system of excavating be ever put into practice amongst the numerous ruins here, the collection of Syracuse will soon be enriched; but it now seems to be entirely abandoned.

Justice requires that I should call the attention of those who govern Sicily to the state of the Sanita, or board of health, here, as its venality and corruption have long become proverbial all over the Mediterranean: this is the more dangerous as all ships coming from the eastward, from whence disease is generally brought, put into Syracuse; knowing that a few dollars will enable them to get a pratique, and thereby to violate a law of such vital importance to the common interest.

In concluding this imperfect sketch of so highly interesting a position, I beg to observe, that should a navy be ever established again in Sicily, the formation of an arsenal at Syracuse would unite innumerable advantages, whilst that of Palermo is altogether unfit for naval purposes.

Although the present moment is not such as to make one very sanguine as to any immediate improvement in Sicily, I should be extremely sorry to relinquish the hope I have long entertained of seeing Syracuse, on some future day, endowed with

the blessings of civil and political liberty, by which it can alone rise out of its present degraded state.

From this place to Cape Passaro the distance is twenty-seven miles. About half way you pass the town of Avola, within a short distance of the beach, containing six thousand inhabitants. The country about here is tolerably well cultivated, and produces great quantity of sugar-cane, corn, wine, oil, and fruits of every kind. Five miles south west of Avola, and about six from the sea, the traveller arrives at Noto, the capital of that province, justly admired for the elegance of its buildings and delightful situation.

This town is one of great antiquity, but having been destroyed in the dreadful earthquake of 1693, its site was removed some miles from the original one.

The population of Noto is estimated at sixteen thousand, and has experienced no increase for many years; several rich landholders reside there; the chief commerce consists in wine, oil, and grain; the adjacent country is extremely rich, producing soda, hemp, and cotton, in great quantities.

There are a great number of convents and churches at Noto, together with an hospital, seminary for education, and Monte di Pieta.

Not being a sea-port, the people of Noto depend chiefly on the cultivation of their lands; but it does not appear that they have made further

advancement in agriculture than any of the other towns in the island, having the same obstacles to contend with.

There are very few remains of antiquity worth noticing in the vicinity of this place, except the fragments of an amphitheatre near the old town.

Not far from Noto, and near the sea-shore, are to be seen the remains of the antient city of Elorus: they consist of a few vestiges of a theatre, a part of the walls, and a piece of water noticed by Pliny as having been a fish pond.

At Cape Passaro there is a very lucrative tunny fishery established, and a small village called Porto Paola, inhabited principally by fishermen. The Cape is rather a low point, and separated from the island by a narrow channel; there is a castle on this, which is usually garrisoned by a few soldiers. It has often been a matter of great surprize that no light-house is established on this dangerous point, frequented as it continually is during the night by our men of war and merchantmen, who are obliged to pass close to the Cape either in coming from, or going to, Malta, from the eastward or Messina: several vessels have been lost for the want of this necessary precaution: the utmost expense of a good light would not exceed two hundred and fifty pounds per annum.

The country in the immediate vicinity of the Cape is in a very neglected and uncultivated state, although there is not finer land in any part of the island. Under the Cape, and for several miles

northward, whole fleets may find shelter during the heavy westerly gales of winter.

The summer is a period of great gaiety in this part of the island, it being usual for many families to resort here for the advantage of sea bathing, and to witness the tunny fishery, one of the greatest sources of festive recreation known to the people of Sicily. The manner of taking that celebrated fish would excite some surprize in England: quantities of large ropes being made into nets that reach sometimes more than half a mile in length, are sunk, and cross each other at right angles; these are suspended from vessels constructed for that purpose, and moored to heavy anchors; being set, the nets are left for several hours under the care of some expert hands, who, in the morning, visit them, accompanied by as many visitors as are sufficiently courageous to trust themselves on the water; these have the advantage of witnessing the manner of taking the tunny entangled in the nets during the night. This operation is performed by means of a hook and rope, by which the prize, sometimes weighing three hundred pounds, is immediately drawn out and taken into the boat; being all collected in this way, they proceed towards the shore, amidst the cries and congratulations of the spectators, who receive them with acclamations on the beach: when the fish are on shore they proceed immediately to the preparation of their dinner; which consists in a proportion of the tunnies prepared in

different ways. The evening passes in the greatest gaiety. The simplicity of this amusement would, I apprehend, be but ill suited to the more refined taste of our English fashionables, who frequent Bath and Tunbridge.

The tunny fish has never been sufficiently known by our countrymen, and although it has not the salmon's delicacy or flavor, yet it may be considered as a very good substitute for that fish, and is found in such abundance as to be within the reach of all the lower classes. The sword fish is uncommonly exquisite; and would not be unworthy of our most celebrated epicures.

These fisheries, all over Sicily, are conducted by companies, or monied individuals, which go to the necessary expense of employing men, and procuring nets: they are, besides, obliged to pay a duty on the profits, which are uncertain, although in some years they are very lucrative: the fish is salted on the spot, packed in casks, and thus prepared for exportation or home consumption:

LETTER V.

——————Litora longe
Fida reor fraterna Erycis, portusque Sicanos.

VIRG. *Æneid*, lib. v.

Southern Coast of Sicily, from Cape Passaro to Girgenti, and thence to Sciacca, Mazzara, Marsella, Trapani, and Segesta, to Palermo—including Observations on the Antiquities, Commerce, &c. &c.

Sicily, 1811.

FROM Passaro to Cape Scaramia, a distance of thirty miles, the coast presents a very uncultivated and arid appearance, there being scarcely a tree to enliven the prospect, and only a few houses inhabited by inconsiderable farmers or husbandmen. The above Cape is only forty-six miles from Malta, and the southern part of the Contado de Modica, one of the most interesting and productive regions in Sicily. The wide contrast exhibited between this place and every other part of the island, has long been a source of admiration and deserved panegyric. This county, the only one in the island, is about thirty miles in length, and ten in breadth, being a very irregular and hilly country, but shewing symptoms of the most persevering and successful industry: the breed of

cattle has been brought to an uncommon degree of perfection; there are, also, numerous flocks of sheep, the wool of which is highly prized in all the markets of the island. Large supplies are annually sent to Malta from this spot, as here every necessary of life is found better and cheaper than elsewhere.

You will naturally be led to inquire, how such a wide difference can exist between this place and the country round it?

This tract of country was made into a county by the great Ruggiero, and given to Gaultieri, a man of great military talents, who had rendered that hero very eminent services in the conquest of Sicily: it was, at the same time, endowed with very singular privileges, which have been considerably increased in succeeding times; amongst the rest, an independent tribunal, with the title of Grand Court, and several other appointments, which constitute it a separate government. The governor is allowed a superb palace and guard, and is chosen by his Sicilian majesty. There is also an ecclesiastical court, at which the bishop of Syracuse presides.

A proportionate increase of population has not failed to be the result of so many local advantages; and in order to shew the effects of a little civil liberty upon this branch of national great ess, I add a list of the principal towns contained within the comparatively narrow space occupied by the Contado of Modica:

Place.	*Population.*	*Natural Productions.*
Modica . . .	24,000	Grain, oil, wine, carrubi, soda, salt, oranges, lemons, cheese, fruits, almonds, and cattle.
Scicli	10,800	
Ragusa . . .	20,000	
Comiso . . .	10,000	
Vittoria . . .	11,000	
Chearamonte .	7,000	
Total .	82,800	

The proprietorship having passed through several families, is now nominally possessed by the Duke of Alba and Ferandina, who lives in Spain; in consequence of which, the extensive revenues arising from this immense fief have, for many years, been sequestered, and form a most important branch of the crown revenues: the rents are collected by a *Procuratori Generale*, who resides in Palermo, and is supposed to visit the lands once a year; this ceremony, which is scarcely ever fulfilled, gave rise to the Abate Balsamo's work; who accompanied Mr. Tommasi there in 1808, and which has been translated, much against his wishes, by an officer of the artillery. A very large sum of money is added to the exchequer of Sicily by the Contado; and no idea whatever is, I believe, entertained of its ever being restored to the Duke of Alba's family. Reflecting upon the advantages enjoyed by the inhabitants of this place, what must be the feelings of the enlightened Sicilian who sees a large tract of country endowed with the means of exerting its industry, while he remains in a state of humiliating bondage?

Several men of learning have been produced in this country, for that, too, requires the charm of civil liberty: amongst them, Tomaso Campailla, author of a celebrated poem called the Seasons, and honored in his time with the unusual title of the philosophical poet.

A few miles westward of Scaramia, there is a famous loading place, the Scaglietti, where all the Maltese sparanaros go for their supplies.

Further on, you arrive at Terra Nuova, a populous town, built close to the sea, and famous for its export of sulphur, which is made in very large quantities near it. Wine and corn are also articles of export from this place. The inhabitants amount to 13,000. Amongst the public establishments here, I shall only particularize—eight convents, an asylum, one hospital, and several churches. The bay is very much exposed, although there is good anchorage, during the summer season, within a mile of the town, in eight or nine fathoms water.

The antiquarians of Sicily have not yet decided whether Terra Nuova is built on the site of the ancient Gela, a colony founded by the Rhodians, and the birth-place of Hiero, of Timogenes the philosopher, and disciple of Theophrastus, also of Apollodorus the comic poet. Some people pretend that the remains of a temple have been traced near the town. The country about it, and extending eighteen miles to Licata is very level; this is now called the plain of Terra Nuova, an-

ciently the Campi Gelae, so productive in the time of Cicero.

Licata is very agreeably situated on the right bank of Fiume Salso, having a range of hills rising west of it: on one of these a strong fort has been constructed, which, with some other works, renders the town a good military position. Large quantities of grain and sulphur are yearly exported from this place.

The inhabitants do not exceed twelve thousand, and have suffered all the hardships resulting from bad harvests for many years; and having no resources except those which were derived from the export of grain, these unfortunate people have been particularly distressed: the number of mendicants is very great; and an examination of the hospital, poor-house, and other places intended for the benefit of the poor here, served to convince me, that institutions of that kind had better not exist, if not properly attended.

There is no possibility of a ship lying here in winter.

In order to make Licata an important and opulent commercial depôt, it would only be necessary to construct a mole, for which the place is remarkably well calculated, from the peculiarity of its position, there being a species of bay formed by the land's projecting southward. This work was in contemplation during the wise and beneficent reign of Charles III., and its execution only prevented by his death. The expense of con-

structing a mole capable of receiving frigates and sloops would not, it is supposed, exceed sixty thousand pounds sterling. A tolerably large boat may go up the river five miles.

Licata is supposed to be risen on the ruins of the ancient Phintia, founded two hundred and eighty-two years before the Christian era; although some assert, that this was the site of Gela: there is a long Greek inscription preserved in the castle which must have been taken from the Gymnasium of that city.

Twelve miles west of Licata there is a neat and well built town called Palma, containing six thousand inhabitants, and famous for the quantity of fine sulphur made in its vicinity; there is no part of Sicily in which this mineral is so good as about Palma; many cargoes are shipped from the caricaturi near it annually, particularly for the British government. Having taken very particular pains to ascertain some facts relative to the process of making sulphur, and also as to the prices generally paid by government for that article, I found that during the last three years it has cost 12s. per cantar of 175 lbs., whereas it might have been farmed with the greatest facility, and, at the utmost, only cost half that sum; a work that might be superintended by an officer of our commissariat, in which case its quality, and the expedition of being shipped without the enormous delays attending its exportation at present, would be important advantages.

Before you approach the Bay of Girgenti, and off Cape Bianco about one mile, there is a rock which should be carefully avoided by navigators, it being scarcely perceptible above water.

The situation of Girgenti, and beauty of scenery which surround this wretched emblem of ancient greatness, is a very happy exception of picturesque effect to that generally seen on the southern coast, and presents to the traveller all that beauty of prospect which has so excited the praise of tourists.

You will, I hope, excuse me if I yield to the feelings which have been so often called by my reiterated visits to this place, and endeavour to convey some idea of them in the following brief account of the country which produced so many examples of elevated genius and refined philosophy. Landing at the mole of Girgenti, you traverse a tolerably good road, and after riding four miles through a fertile and highly picturesque country, the town is seen on a high hill, surrounded on every side with the most romantic scenes imaginable. The entrance of Girgenti is rather difficult: little can be said in praise of the cleanliness or regularity of the buildings: the inhabitants of this town have also experienced all the effects of bad harvests and circumscribed commerce. The number of souls here, in 1790, amounted to twenty thousand; whereas, at present, they do not exceed fourteen thousand: the relation of this circumstance is alone sufficient to give an idea of this city's decline.

Amongst the public buildings, I was led to admire the cathedral, a magnificent pile of the thirteenth century. There are, at Girgenti, about fifteen convents of both sexes, an ecclesiastical seminary, hospital, and *Monte di Pieta*. The proportion of the population devoted to religion in this town exceeds all rational bounds, and has produced a most sensible effect in accelerating the ruined state in which it now is. Corn is the great object of agricultural pursuit in the neighbourhood, and the principal export in good years; sulphur is also an object of public industry. The harbour is formed by a very fine mole, constructed in 1752, at the public expense; it was, at one time, capable of receiving very large ships, but has, during the last seven years, been so neglected, that there are only twelve feet water on the bar; and owing to the government having abandoned every precaution for keeping the harbour clear, it will only require a few years more to render this important place, the sole shelter afforded for ships on the southern coast of Sicily, totally useless. This fact becomes still more extraordinary, when it is added, that several hundred convicts are employed for the purpose of keeping the mole clear, by means of vessels properly fitted up with machinery to fulfil that object. Besides the funds allowed by the Sicilian government, the port charges are of a nature sufficiently exorbitant to justify those who frequent the place in an expectation of this duty being more attended to.

In consequence of there being so few ports on this part of the island, and still less facility of land-carriage, it was found necessary, for the better regulation and encouragement of commerce, to establish magazines wherever the product of the district was in sufficient abundance to admit of exportation. Magazines and a quay were consequently built at the public expense, and officers appointed to superintend them. The utility of these establishments is very extensive, and shews that the former government knew how to secure its own interest by serving that of the community; for a proprietor has only to convey his property to the sea-coast, and deposit it with those appointed to superintend the caricatore; from thence it is embarked when vessels come for it.

At Girgenti there are many large fosses cut out of the solid rock, capable of containing an immense quantity of grain; the persons who have charge of them are situated in the same manner as all others holding offices of that kind in Sicily, being so miserably remunerated, that every temptation is held out for peculation and fraud.

Those who visit Girgenti, and witness the extremely wretched state of its population, without commerce, manufactures, or any other means of existence, cannot help heaving a sigh of regret at fallen grandeur; and when viewing the splendid scenery that extends on each side the town, stretching before it towards the sea, together with the celebrated Temples of Jupiter, Olympus, Juno,

Lucina, Concord, and Hercules, an important moral lesson is irresistibly impressed on the feelings of the most indifferent observer.

There are a few very respectable collections of vases, sepulchral lamps, and coins, in this town; and, if we may judge from the number and beauty of designs which distinguish the former, it is impossible not to form an exalted idea of what the fine arts were here; indeed all historians have borne ample testimonies to that point.

The large sarcophagus, preserved in the cathedral, is deservedly an object of admiration to amateurs, and has furnished a considerable subject of dispute amongst the literati of Sicily. The subject so finely sculptured on its side is now generally thought to represent the story of Phedra and Hypolitus, in opposition to the former opinion of its being the death of Phintzia, tyrant of Agrigentum, or some action in the life of Phalaris.

There is also in the cathedral an exquisite *chef-d'œuvre* of Guido Reni, representing a Madona and Child. Those who are at all interested for the discovery of antique monuments cannot but be anxious to see a regular system of excavation prosecuted about the ruins here.

Leaving Girgenti, the first town worth mentioning, west of that place, is Sciacca, the *Thermæ Selinunti* of antiquity, justly celebrated for the hot baths in its vicinity, said to be efficacious in cases of paralytic diseases. There is a very considerable caricatori of grain here. The town is

well built, at the base of a mountain called St. Calagero, and contains 11,000 inhabitants: there are twelve convents and several churches here, an hospital, Monte di Pieta, and an asylum for orphans. The neighbouring country is in a tolerable state of cultivation; and, besides wheat, produces sulphur and barilla, which form its exports. The anchorage is only good during the summer season, being entirely exposed to southerly winds.

Sciacca is said to be reduced to a state of comparative insignificance and poverty, by a famous dispute which arose between the two families of Perallo and Di Luna more than two hundred and fifty years ago. This was conducted with so much virulence and acrimony, that it required all the efforts of the Sicilian government to prevent its recurrence. This circumstance forms a curious epoch in the Sicilian history, and seems to have fanned the embers of feudal barbarism, not entirely removed even now from many parts of the island.

This town is thought by many to be the birthplace of the tyrant of Syracuse, Agathocles, celebrated for his enterprizing character and expedition to Carthage while his own capital was blockaded by the fleet of that nation. In modern times, the historian Fazzello and learned Inveges were amongst the distinguished natives of Sciacca.

From this place the country, for a space of ninety miles, has in general the appearance of being highly cultivated and extremely populous. About ten miles west of the town, you arrive at

a very interesting spot, the ruins of Selinunte, founded by a colony of Megarians, 640 years before the Christian era, and famous for its long dissensions with Segesta, which led to its destruction by Hannibal. It resumed its former splendor, however, shortly after, as appears by the following lines from Strabo:—*Neque enim hodiè incoli scimus Himeram, neque Gelam, neque Selinuntem.*

The ruins of three very large temples are to be seen close to the sea-shore, but in so dilapidated a state, as to render any conjectures relative to them very uncertain. Antiquaries suppose one to have been dedicated to Neptune, and another to Castor and Pollux: this supposition is strengthened by historical assertions. Two inconsiderable rivers join the sea here, the Crimiso and Hypsa of antiquity, now Fiume Bilici and Madecini.

Four miles from these ruins, towards the interior, is seen Castel Vetrano, a large town, containing 12,000 inhabitants, ten convents, several churches, an hospital, and *Monte di Pieta.* The country round this place is very productive in grain, wine, and oil. The sportsman has an ample field of amusement in the woods, which are only a few miles from it. The ancient Entellinum, a city founded by the Trojans, is known to have existed near this place, and has been ascertained by several ruins.

Directing your course westward, and crossing a luxurious and productive country, the town of

Mazzara is seen on the sea-coast. This place is stated to have been the first part of Sicily occupied by the Saracens, and was, under their dominion, in the most flourishing condition; it contains a population of 10,000 souls, and is now only remarkable for the number of its churches and convents; there are also an hospital, public seminary of education, and *Monte di Pieta*. The wine made in the vicinity of this place is highly esteemed. There is a very considerable export of wine, brandy, oil, soda, &c. from Mazzara. The road-stead is unfortunately much exposed. The city of Marsala is only twelve miles from the above town, and built close to Cape Boeo or Lilibæum, the western extremity of Sicily. Marsala contains a population of 25,000 souls, and will always be a place of considerable importance, owing to the fine and productive country which surrounds it. The traveller is no longer enabled to trace in the modern town any remains of the great Lilibeo of antiquity. There was a very fine port here, which John of Austria, son to Charles V., directed to be destroyed in 1562,* to prevent the Turkish

* The whole reign of the House of Austria, beginning with Charles V. in 1516, and ending in 1665 with Charles II., appears to have been fatal both to the liberty and prosperity of Sicily. Many new regulations in the administration of justice, which led to the existing abuses, were established; the privileges of the barons increased; several taxes imposed; and, to crown all, this port, so celebrated with the Carthaginians, Greeks,

galleys from taking shelter there. This was a great misfortune to the inhabitants, and has been most severely felt ever since. The loss, however, is not irreparable, and, by means of a long reef of rocks, which forms even now a temporary shelter for small vessels, a capital harbour might be made for ships of any burthen, without incurring any great expense.

Marsala is tolerably well built, and divided into two parts by a very fine and spacious street called the Cassaro; there are about fifteen convents, a great number of churches, and all the other public establishments found in the large towns, but vitiated by the same abuses: in fact, although the trade of this place has been very considerable, particularly in their exports of wine, oil, wheat, and barilla; yet, to those who have visited it, there is exactly the same mendicity found as in other places; also the same complaints of the people against the number of petty tyrants formed by the senate and their dependents. The wine of Marsala differs in no way from that of Mazzara, and has been long highly esteemed, but is now in a great degree supplanted by those of the Greek Islands.

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and Romans, destroyed, to save the expense of a few hundred troops, which might so easily have defended it. The latter was indeed a cruel policy, and serves to mark the character of those days.

Messina also experienced the effects of Charles's displeasure; and, for having held out much longer than any of the other towns, the fortifications were razed to the ground.

The town is surrounded by a wall, dry ditch, and flanked by six very ill-contrived bastions. The guns have been all taken away, except a few, to strengthen Trapani. A little labour would at any time render it a respectable place of arms, as the position is extremely good, and not commanded by any heights whatever. The people of Marsala, and indeed all this part of Sicily, have been for a long period much exposed to the attacks of the Barbary corsairs; numbers are continually in slavery both at Tripoly, Tunis, and Algiers.

From Cape Lilibeo to Trapani, a distance of fourteen miles, the coast is thought extremely dangerous, there being a shoal extending all the way, and reaching in some places three miles from the shore. There is, however, a very safe passage for the largest fleets between it and Favignana. This part of Sicily is by no means so dangerous as represented. The space between Marsala and Trapani is covered with large salines, and the salt is highly thought of for its superior quality, and exported in large quantities to the Adriatic and other places.

Trapani, the *Drepanum* of antiquity, is a strong fortress, and merits very particular notice, both as a naval, military, and commercial position. The population of this important town, notwithstanding the ruined state of its commerce, is still estimated at 24,000. There are in Trapani thirteen convents for men and women, thirty-six churches, an hospital wretchedly administered, *Monte di Pieta*, and two public seminaries of education; the

streets are extremely regular, and, in general, this city is better built than most of the other towns in the island. It stands on a narrow and low neck of land, which projects considerably into the sea, forming a very good harbour, which is both susceptible, and in want of, many improvements; it is now capable of receiving ships of almost any class; merchant vessels of 300 tons are enabled to load at the quay; but in the vicinity of the light-house there is a space capable of being made into a mole fit to receive line of battle ships. Indeed, every part of the harbour can at any time be very considerably deepened; but, as with the Mole of Girgenti, it would appear that the Sicilian government are desirous of its being stopped up altogether.

Until the commencement of the present war, Trapani was one of the principal trading towns in Sicily; it has, however, experienced a melancholy reverse, and the inhabitants have now only to reflect on what they once were, and deplore the events which have with such rapidity led to their ruin. It has often been observed, that our situation is seldom so bad, but it admits of some consolation: this is, I trust, the case with the people of Trapani; and I am amongst the number of those who think that a great deal may be done even now in favour of this town, calculated to insure a return of its lost prosperity, and at the same time be highly beneficial to the interests of the British nation. As the trade of this place, previous to the King of Naples' rupture with Buonaparte, was

nearly altogether conducted with the ports of France, particularly Marseilles and Genoa, it is of considerable importance to secure the attachment of the inhabitants, by holding out an equivalent to them equal to what they have lost, more particularly as the exertion of their industry would be of a nature directly to benefit ourselves.

The Trapanese have long been remarkable for a spirit of honest industry, which has raised them very far above the generality of Sicilians in the estimation of other nations, particularly their seamen who have always been thought brave and enterprizing, and amounted in 1800 to no less than 3000. The trade of Trapani consisted in the exportation of salt, soda, coral, raw and manufactured, and alabaster. With respect to the first of these articles, it is thought to possess every good quality; and the process of preparing it for use and embarkation supported several hundred families, while a very large profit accrued to the merchant. It was usual when the Adriatic was open, to export 100,000 cantars per annum. The inhabitants of Istria and Dalmatia, it ought to be observed, have hitherto depended on Sicily for their supplies of this article, but owing to the unreasonable and mischievous prohibition of our various orders in council, the inhabitants of those countries have lately constructed very extensive salt works, and should our restrictions not be taken off, this great branch of Trapanese commerce will be nearly annihilated. If, however, the British government suffer its ex-

port they will not only be rendering incalculable benefit to the inhabitants of that town and of Marsala, but in return be supplied with wheat; and naval stores, articles, upon which our political existence here, so entirely depends. Some people fond of cherishing the system of delusion which has of late years been encouraged with so much fatal assiduity, pretend that by keeping the Illyrian provinces without salt, you are sure of their shaking off the French yoke. To those who know the real state of affairs in that country, nothing could appear so monstrously preposterous as such an opinion; and admitting that the argument was founded on fact, is it either humane, generous, or worthy of a great nation to distress a whole people who have so reluctantly yielded to the arm of conquest, and been thereby obliged to abandon their old friends? Besides, how infinitely do we gain by the paltry concession of suffering salt to be exported? Without dwelling on a subject which carries such conviction along with it, I shall merely observe, that during the last three years the above prohibitions have not only contributed to create a great deal of increased poverty in Trapani, but served to irritate the people of Dalmatia, and deprive our arsenals and soldiers of large supplies of the utmost importance, and which cannot be obtained from any other part of the Mediterranean.

The price of salt has undergone an extraordinary depreciation in consequence of the long suspen-

sion of its exportation, being now only two shillings the cantar, instead of five, which it sold for a few years ago.

The soda or barilla has always formed one of the principal branches of Sicilian commerce, and used formerly to be exported in very large quantities to Trieste, Venice, and the ports of Leghorn, Genoa, and Marseilles; and of the 100,000 cantars annually exported, Trapani is supposed to have contributed 24,000, of a quality equal to any in the island. This article has for the last five years been diminishing in its value, and immense quantities remain in the magazines without any hope of finding a market. This article which sold for six dollars per cantar, will not now produce half that sum.

There are several coral banks in the vicinity of Trapani, but they are now almost exhausted, and the quality is far inferior to that which is found on the coast of Africa, monopolized, at present, altogether by the enemy. This is perhaps one of the most singular hardships which has befallen the people of Trapani, and deserves very particular notice, being at present a source of great profit to the piratical states, yet of which we might avail ourselves; it becomes necessary, therefore, that I should illustrate the subject in treating of the commerce of this city, to which the coral fishery has, until latterly, been an object of the first importance. When a British army had landed in Sicily, nothing was more natural than the general expecta-

tion of an immediate reconciliation being effected between this island and the Barbary powers, together with the prompt liberation of those ill-fated beings whose destiny had thrown them into captivity. Such a measure would have produced feelings and sentiments very different from those which animate the whole nation at present; and amongst the new branches of commerce to which it would have given rise, Trapani would have very largely participated, particularly in the article of coral. It was, however, proposed by the Governor of Malta, in 1809, after he had heard of Mr. Blankley's successful negotiation, that the merchants of Trapani should fit out a number of boats to be employed on the banks of La Cala, supplied with a British pass and protected while there by one of his Majesty's ships of war; the proposition was gladly received, and although no convoy was sent as promised, several boats were sent off. One of these returning with the fruits of a prosperous harvest, and vainly relying on the validity of a British passport, was overtaken by a storm and forced to take shelter in Porto Farina, whence the conscientious Bey of Tunis, without the smallest regard to our pass, immediately sequestered the vessel, and made slaves of the crew; the rapacity, breach of faith, and marked injustice of this act, was self-evident, and the English consul at Tunis represented the matter, first to his Highness without effect, and then to Sir A. Ball, and the naval commander-in-chief off Toulon. There were in

consequence several applications made, but the unfortunate people were detained in captivity until June, 1811, when two of his Majesty's ships procured their release, and that of the coral boat, not however, without the utmost difficulty; the property, coral, and nets, were kept. Such an event, as you may readily imagine, not only put an end to the coral fishery, but proved to the people of Sicily how little they had to expect from us. The foregoing circumstance is a mere trifle in itself, but it was thought a very important one here; and the very industrious manner in which it was circulated throughout the island proves my assertion. Nothing more was heard of the coral fishery until lately that new efforts are making to revive it, but with less probability of success than before.

In an infant undertaking of this kind, one would think that those who embarked in it, and went to the heavy expense of fitting out the boats and manning them, would be rather entitled to a bounty from the Sicilian government, than obliged to pay a tax of £50 for the privilege of fishing on the La Cala banks. This is, however, the case, and has naturally prevented the Trapanese from entering into the speculation again. They are besides uncertain of naval support, as it has been withheld for so long a period.

The alabaster of Sicily is not remarkable for the goodness of its quality although small masses of a very pure texture are extremely abundant:

this production is chiefly found in a range of hills within twenty miles of Trapani, and when brought there is sculptured into a variety of ornaments, more particularly small statues, relics, and urns. Here I have to observe, that all correctness of design or elegance of execution, seem to be lost amongst the Trapanese artists; nor is the wretched academy of drawing, established at the seminary, by any means calculated to restore such necessary objects. There are also several people, who live by engraving cameos on a peculiar shell produced on the coast, but little can be said in favour of this branch of the fine arts, any more than of the former.

A very lucrative Tunny fishery is established on a small island which lies three miles off the harbour, called the Formichi; it belongs to the family of Palavicini, merchants who reside in Genoa, and by a singular privilege are permitted to derive the benefits of it although living in an enemy's country. The exact propriety of this circumstance, considering the actual state of the Trapanese, would, I think, admit of some doubt with the most scrupulous advocates of civil and political right.

Trapani, as a military position, is highly important to the defence of Sicily against the invasion or temporary attack of a foreign enemy, as its port would at any time afford ample shelter to a large fleet, while the open country which leads from it into the interior towards the

capital offers every facility to the rapid progress of a military force. The works, although strengthened very much at the British government's expense, have a number of weak points. The construction of a new gate and sally port towards the land has added much to its strength in that quarter; but the lines which surround the town northward are in a state of very great decay, and considerably exposed, there not being one flanking bastion to protect them.

The classical amateur in visiting Trapani will recollect with pleasure, that the great hero of Virgil landed here after his perilous voyage from Troy, and here buried the venerable Anchises previous to his departure from Italy. Those who have read the history of the first and second Punic wars, must also remember the numerous sanguinary sea fights between the two naval powers for the possession of this place. There is not, however, the smallest vestige of its ancient glory, although successfully occupied by the Sicani, Phœnicians, Carthaginians, and Romans who honored it with the title of a consular city.

Trapani is governed by a senate like most other towns in Sicily; their number is five; they are aided by a Syndic. Candor requires that I should record a fact illustrative of the character and integrity of these gentlemen. It happened in the month of April, which will ever be recollected with sorrow by the people of Sicily, that there was a cargo of corn presented to them for sale, as they are always intrusted with the provision of

that article; the presentation was made when there was not more than six weeks' consumption in the town, without the most distant prospect of procuring any more. The corn was, notwithstanding, rejected, upon an idle plea of not being sufficiently good in its quality. The consequence was, that the propietor sent it off to the Spanish market, and a few weeks after the inhabitants of Trapani were without bread. The feelings of indignation created by such a proceeding can be more easily imagined than described.

Four miles east of the above city, the Mount of San Giuliana rises to a great height; this was the famous Eryx of antiquity, so celebrated for its temple and the adoration of Venus Erycina, founded as some say by Dædalus, and according to other authorities by Æneas, who was so kindly received there by its king Acestes. The veneration of the Romans for that fascinating and lovely deity was truly enthusiastic. We are informed that they appropriated no less than the tribute of seven Sicilian cities to this temple, which was frequented by myriads from every part of the empire. The voluptuous dances and other curious ceremonies instituted there, must have made Mount Eryx a very fashionable resort in former times. There is scarcely any thing by which the antiquarian can be guided here in ascertaining the extent or magnificence of this temple. Several fine granite pillars were found some years ago, and a square cavity which had the appearance of a

well, has retained the name of Venus ever since. Several fine bronzes, or statues have been found here, and there is in the town of San Giuliana a tolerably good collection of medals.

It is built on the highest pinnacle of the mountain, and commands an enchanting prospect of the surrounding objects. The inhabitants of this town are about 7,000. There are nine convents, fifteen churches, hospital, and *Monte di Pieta*. Here the people are remarkable for their longevity, owing to their enjoying the finest atmosphere in Sicily; and as to the women of San Giuliana, their uncommon beauty has long been proverbial. This may account in some degree for the establishment of a temple dedicated to Venus; at all events it evinces the good taste of the founder.

There is nothing very remarkable from Trapani along the coast to Cape San Vito, and the gulf of Castello Mare, except a small rocky island, which lies four miles north-east of the town, and two from the shore, between which and the shore there is a free passage for the largest ships. There is also good anchorage to the westward of San Vito during south-easterly gales.

Leaving Trapani with a view of prosecuting your journey by land to Palermo, distant seventy miles from the former town, a variety of objects excite your attention. For seven miles out of Trapani there is a part of the well known carriage road, projected many years ago, for the completion of which, millions have been paid, by the

people of Sicily; but the admirable design of completing it to the capital, has long been abandoned by this careless government. On leaving that part already finished, you traverse a range of country thirty miles in length, which is without a single house on it, and devoted to the pasturage of a few hundred head of cattle. The ground is remarkably rich and capable of producing any thing. The appearance of this place, marked as it is by desolation, struck me most forcibly, and gave rise to some very melancholy reflections on the general state of Sicily. When arrived at the end of this uncultivated space, the temple of Segesta is the first object of admiration.

The ancients seem to have been singularly judicious in the situations which they invariably chose for the construction of their cities; this is no where so conspicuous as in examining the site of Segesta. Of that celebrated city, asserted to have been founded by the companions of Æneas, there is nothing now to be seen except the beautiful temple, by some supposed to have been dedicated to Venus, and by others to Diana. It is, however, quite sufficient to commemorate the existence of that most splendid city, and is in a state of the highest preservation. The lovers of antiquity will, I much fear, have, ere long, to lament the fall of a part of this superb structure, which seems to be on the point of yielding to the unsparing hand of time. His Sicilian majesty directed this

temple, with some others, to be restored in 1787. This work was most miserable executed, but the usual inscription in very conspicuous letters on a marble slab was not omitted. The corner pillar on the right angle of the portico is nearly worn away towards the top, and if not remedied, that part of the fabric must inevitably fall. I mention this circumstance more particularly, in the hope that so important a monument may be preserved entire. The temple is built upon a rising ground, with a high precipice west of it, and towards the east, as magnificent a coup d'œil as there is to be seen in any part of the island; the deep valley on the left is terminated by a view of Calatafimi, a large and populous town, while in front you see the town of Alcamo, a part of the Gulf of Castello Mare, which assumes the appearance of a lake, and in the distance Pastanico and the mountains which surround Palermo. The hot baths or Acque Segestane, are only two miles from the temple, and are highly spoken of in Sicily for their medicinal virtues.

The town of Alcamo, six miles from Segesta, is a place of considerable importance, and contains 12,000 inhabitants; it commands a fine prospect of the gulf, which, as seen from this point, is extremely picturesque. The quantities of corn, wine, and oil, produced in the neighbourhood of Alcamo, are not exceeded in any district, of equal extent, in the island; this town is besides a place of arms

and the head quarters of a regiment of cavalry. The name of Vincenso de Alcamo is well known to the literati of Sicily, as having contributed to the revival of Italian poetry, in the reign of the Emperor Frederick who was so favorable to the interests of learning.

From Alcamo to Partanico is 14 miles, and through a very luxurious country: you leave Castello Mare on the right; that town is situate close to the sea shore, and contains a population of 6000 souls, whose chief support is derived from agriculture. The gulf is formed by Cape San Vito, on the west, and Cape Della Ramo on the east; it forms a semicircle, at least 60 miles in circumference: there is very good anchorage all round it; but it is not considered as safe, during winter, being exposed to north-easterly gales.

Partanico is built at the base of the Palermo mountains, and contains 5,000 inhabitants; the country round it, although one of the most productive and beautiful in Sicily, is subject to the *Mal Aria*. From hence to Palermo, 24 miles, there is an excellent carriage road, cut over a most difficult and irregular range of mountains, which proves, beyond contradiction, in opposition to those who have asserted the contrary, that roads may be made in Sicily with the same degree of facility as in other countries.

The coast from Castello Mare to Palermo offers nothing worthy of being particularly noticed.

Having led you thus far, I ought to apologize

for the unexpected length to which this part of my plan has led me. It was, however, in some degree indispensable, and, I trust, not without a little utility. In my next, I propose giving you a concise view of the interior.

LETTER VI.

Multa solo virtus: jam reddere fœnis aratris
Jam montis umbrare olea, dare nomina Baccho;
Nectare Cecropeas Hyblæo accendere ceras.

SILIUS ITALICUS, *lib.* 14.

Interior of Sicily—Badness of its roads—Face of the country—Enna—Castro Giovanni—Antediluvian Vestiges—Leonforte—Nicosia—Calatagirone—Piazza—Caltinissetta—Corleone—Piani de' Greci, &c. &c.

Sicily, 1811.

WITH the advantage of good roads, of which the interior of Sicily is entirely destitute, there is no part of Europe through which the eye of curiosity and research, could be more agreeably or profitably directed; but the latter is a very trifling consideration when compared to the innumerable national blessings, which a greater facility of interior communication would produce. This subject is of the utmost importance to the future legislators of the island, and if neglected, little need be expected from any other exertion of their wisdom, for it is amongst the very first objects

connected with the island's prosperity. As I before observed, the interior of Sicily, with the exception of the plains of Catania, Terra Nuova, the country between Castel Vetrano, and Trapani, Vale of Palermo and Plain of Milazzo, presents a continued succession of hills, divided by deep and fertile valleys, sometimes interrupted by a small plain: the torrents of rain which fall during the winter months, descending with violence and rapidity from the mountains, take very uncertain courses, making their way towards the sea, over the valleys, every where formed by the nature of the country: this circumstance renders the construction of bridges absolutely necessary, in order to insure any means of travelling in that season; which is now attended with the greatest danger, approaching sometimes to impossibility: this may be considered as one of the principal causes of so few strangers knowing any thing about the interior; and to it may be altogether attributed the wretched state of those who do not inhabit the sea coast.

Nature has rendered Sicily one of the strongest countries imaginable; and, perhaps, there is not a fortress in Europe which has a greater claim to be called impregnable, than the celebrated Castro Giovanni; this city is placed exactly in the center of Sicily, and has, from the earliest periods of its history, been a place of the first consideration: at present it is chiefly important as a military position, but the surrounding country was formerly

said to produce the proportion of an hundred fold. It was this amazing fertility which, probably, led the first inhabitants of the island to make Castro Giovanni, then called Enna, the abode of Ceres, who is said to have erected a superb temple there, and instituted the famous mysteries of Eleusinia.

"Prima Ceres ferro mortales vertere terram
Instituit, cum jam glandes atque arbuta sacræ
Deficerent sylvæ, et victum Dodona negaret:
Mox et frumentis labor additus."—VIRG. *Georg. I.*

The sufferings of Enna when sacked during the first Servilian war, and the unheard of cruelties practised by the irritated rabble, particularly on the family of Damophilius, will be in the recollection of all those who have read Sicilian history, nor did it escape the rapacity of Verres, who made it one of his objects of plunder. Enna revived again under Augustus, who honored it with the title of a municipal city, and gave the people many other privileges. To the Saracens it must have been a place of primary importance, from its strong position; and it appears to have been most highly appreciated by the Normans who had very great difficulty in rescuing it out of the former's hands. In the reign of the Emperor Frederick, a colony from Lombardy was sent there; the same monarch caused the works to be strengthened, which were afterwards rebuilt by Frederick of Arragon, in the 14th century;

when a part of the temple of Bellona, and an amphitheatre were discovered.

The population of Castro Giovanni does not now exceed 10,000 souls; the mountain upon which this town and fortress are built, enjoys the purest atmosphere in Sicily, and commands a most extensive and variegated prospect. Much has lately been done to strengthen the works, which consist of a low wall, thrown up on the edge of a deep and inaccessible precipice that surrounds the town; the approach to which is flanked by several pieces of artillery. The difficulty of attacking this town is extremely great, and heightened by a number of obstacles, seldom encountered any where so frequently as in Sicily: for a regular siege is out of the question, there being no ground upon which a military force could establish itself; and the only way of even attempting an assault, is at the entrance of the town, which is extremely well defended by a ditch, draw-bridge, and battery. The Queen of Sicily has for some time looked to this fortress as her dernier resource, in the event of hostilities breaking out between her Majesty and the British ministry; and I understand it to have been her intention to retire here until relieved by her allies, the French. There are only two battalions of Sicilian troops kept there, at present, and the situation of those unfortunate people during the last winter, when I visited the place, was truly wretched; without cloaths, pay, or rations, the soldiers placed for the defence of so strong a

post, were literally thrown on the casual charity of the inhabitants; and in common with their fellow sufferers in arms, were daily praying for the aid and assistance of the British government.

There are numerous churches and convents in Castro Giovanni. The public live chiefly by agriculture. The amazing quantity of marine productions found all over the interior of this island, are strong arguments in favor of a new world; those which I saw, while in the vicinity of Castro Giovanni, consisted principally of very large oysters, muscle, and scallop shells, all in a state of petrifaction. In the neighbourhood of Melitello, in Val de Noto, large fish have been found several feet under ground.

Another hill, upon which the town of Callicibetta is built, stands within two miles of the former town, and might, from its military position, be considered as its rival. This town contains 5000 souls, and was occupied by Ruggiero before he succeeded in taking Castro Giovanni. In the event of making a military station of the one, the propriety of fortifying this town must also occur to our commander-in-chief, as they will be a mutual support, equally difficult of access. The lake of Pergusa is only five miles from this quarter, but having noticed that famous spot before, I shall not say any thing about it here. From Mount Enna, on which Castro Giovanni stands, it is impossible to contemplate the wild beauty of the surrounding objects, without calling to mind the many great

and interesting events which mark the page of Sicilian history.

Several large and populous towns are seen on every side and generally built in the most romantic situations, while Etna, in the distance, bounds this charming prospect. San Filippo d'Argiro, the ancient Argyrium, is one of the most conspicuous objects seen; that town is built on the summit of a lofty hill, and defended by a castle, which was formerly considered very strong; it contains about 6000 inhabitants, and the neighbouring country is extremely fertile.

Argyrium, said to be founded by the Sicanians, long before the siege of Troy, was a very splendid city in the time of Dionysius, and gave birth to that celebrated historian, Diodorus Siculus; whose name is supposed to have been discovered on a Greek inscription, now in the Biscari museum at Catania. No remains have, however, been discovered of the numerous temples, forum, towers, and pyramids, or great amphitheatre, which ornamented this place. West of the town there is an extensive wood, supposed to be that wherein the mysteries of Diana were celebrated.

There is also a little further westward, the town of Leonforte, which contains 8000 souls, and considered very opulent, there being a considerable annual fair, which commences in August, and is frequented by great numbers from the adjacent towns.

About fifteen miles north of Castro Giovanni, there is another populous town, called Nicosia, containing 13,000 inhabitants, and a very strong military position. There are in this town, as in all the others in the interior of the island, numerous churches and convents. The laws are administered by a captain and two judges; there is also a senate to superintend the domestic polity. In Nicosia modern authors have recognized the ancient Herbita, founded in the earliest period of this island's history, and famous for having successfully opposed the arms of Dionysius, tyrant of Syracuse, whose utmost efforts against it were ineffectual. Colonies from this place are also said to have founded Calacta and Alesa. Herbeta was amongst the towns of Sicily which were honoured by the eulogies of Cicero in his prosecution of Verres, and denominated the Good; he also mentions a renowned orator, Phylinus. After the conquest of Sicily by the Count Ruggiero, the population of Nicosia was increased by a colony of Lombards.

Many great men have sprung from this place, particularly Francisco Testa, archbishop of Monreale, revered for his many virtues, and highly esteemed as a literary character. Three miles to the westward of Nicosia there is a small town, called Sperlinga, remarkable for having afforded an asylum to several Provençals, during the Sicilian Vespers, which circumstance is commemo-

rated by the following inscription on the gate by which you enter the town:

"Quod Siculis placuit sola Sperlinga negavit."

The Sicilian geographers suppose the famous city of Engyum to have flourished near this place, celebrated for its founder, Minos, who conducted a colony of Cretans to that part of Sicily, and instituted the adoration of the *Dei Madri*. The arms of Timoleon afterwards drove the tyrant Leptimus from it, and P. Scipio is said to have consecrated a number of helmets and coats of mail of exquisite workmanship in the Temple of Jupiter, on his glorious termination of the second Punic war.

Proceeding twelve miles northwards, towards the wood of Caronia, there is another large town, Troina, the *Troionopoli* of antiquity, with a population of 6000 souls, and situated in the centre of a very abundant country. The woods of Troina contain quantities of fine timber, and if superintended as already observed, with more care, might soon be a considerable source of public utility.

South of Castro Giovanni there are several very large and populous towns, besides those in the county of Modica, mentioned in my last letter. Those which deserve to be more particularly noticed, are Aidona, Piazza, Mazzarini, Calatagirone, and Mineo; the latter town contains 8000 inhabitants, with a proportionate number of churches and convents. It was formerly called

Mene, and is said to have been the birth-place of Ducesius king of the Sicoli, who established the adoration of Ceres, Apollo, and Mercury, to whom superb temples were dedicated.

Calatagirone, nearly forty miles south of Castro Giovanni, is a very opulent and large town, containing 20,000 inhabitants. The situation of this place on the declivity of a high hill, together with an unusually fine atmosphere, will, it is hoped, contribute to its future improvement. The neighbouring country is in general tolerably well cultivated, and uncommonly productive, particularly in wheat, saffron, and cattle of every kind. In the town there are a number of highly useful public establishments, and amongst others, an hospital, orphan and poor-house, two *Monte di Pieta*, and a seminary for education. The religious establishments consist of twenty churches and sixteen convents.

The Literati of Sicily have long been divided as to the original founders of this town, but the general opinion now adopted is, that the inhabitants of Gela took refuge there, together with those of Calacta, after the destruction of those cities; however this may be, there are no remains by which a correct opinion can be formed of its former magnificence or importance.

Piazza is not more than fifteen miles from Castro Giovanni, and contains 12,000 souls. This town's origin is enveloped in considerable obscurity. There are two large fairs held there during

the year, which were formerly very well attended. The public establishments are like those of the last mentioned place, except that the number of convents bears a much greater proportion to the population, being no less than seventeen, together with a great many churches.

Not far from Piazza eastward, there is a small town, called Palagonia, which belongs to the prince of that name. This place has experienced all the miseries of bad harvests, and accumulated civil and political abuses during late years; and while the prince was building a superb edifice in Palermo, the unfortunate inhabitants were under the necessity of selling the very tiles and beams which covered their houses for subsistence.

Travelling westward, and entering Val de Mazzara amongst a great number of towns and villages, those of Mazzarino, Caltinissetta, Castro Nuovo, and Corleone, you cross the Himera Meridionale, or Fiume Salso, which bounded the Sicanian territory, and now separates Val di Noto from that of Mazzara. The two provinces are, however, joined by a beautiful bridge of one arch, built in the reign of Charles V., by the Viceroy de la Vega.

The arch is more than sixty feet high, and supported by two precipices. During winter this part of the island would be totally impassable if it was not for the bridge. The bridge is one of those wonders which have given rise to a famous proverbial saying in the island, un Monte, (Etna,)

un Fonte, (Arethuse,) un Ponte," the above mentioned.

Leaving Mazzarino on the left, which contains 10,000 inhabitants, you cross the Salso, and four miles further enter the town of Caltinissetta.

This town has a population of nearly 18,000 souls, and from its climate, situation, and neat style of the building, is considered as a most agreeable place of residence. There are numerous and very useful public establishments here, together with a large proportion of convents, religious houses, and churches. The fair is considerable, and is held for fifteen days. The adjacent country is remarkably fine, and very productive, particularly in grain.

Caltinissetta is supposed to be built on the site of the ancient Nissa, which opinion is confirmed by a marble found in the ruins of a tower close to the town, with the following inscription:

"Esculapio et Hymeræ Fluvio populus Nisæ."

Leaving this town you pass Sutera, on the right, and traversing a mountainous country, arrive at Castro Nuovo, and Camerata, two large and populous towns, situated in a most luxuriant country. The mineral salt found in great abundance near Camerata is held in the highest estimation by the Sicilians, who attribute to it a powerful balsamic quality. In the vicinity of Castro Nuovo there are several quarries of marble, particularly one of a beautiful yellow hue, out of

which several masses have been taken, and are now to be seen at Caserta, where they have been converted into columns.

The wheat produced in such abundance about this part of Sicily is conveyed to the Caricaturas of Girgenti, Licata, and Terra Nuova, where it is embarked for several other parts of Sicily and Malta.

Naro is another considerable town which ought not to be omitted. It is situated in the midst of a fine country, about fifteen miles from the sea coast near Palma, and is a very strong military position. The population of this town, thought to be the *Motyum* of Diodorus, exceeds 12,000, particularly esteemed for their industry and agricultural knowledge. Within a few miles of Naro, there is another large town, Canicatta, much spoken of for the beauty of its situation. It contains 16,000 inhabitants, and the usual public establishments. There is an extensive collection of ancient armour and weapons seen in the Prince of Catolica's palace here, who is the proprietor. A fountain in the market-place is ornamented with a fine statue of Mercury; there is also another of Neptune: both from the antique, and considered to be highly finished specimens.

Towards the northern side of the island, Corleone is the most conspicuous town; it is within twenty-four miles of Palermo, and much celebrated for the beauty of its situation. The population exceeds 12,000. It is an extremely well

built town, and, amongst the public institutions, boasts of an hospital, public seminary of education, and poor-house, &c.

Convents and churches are of course very numerous. The position, in a military point of view, has been always considered as admirable, having entire command of the neighbouring country. It was very well fortified formerly, and held out for a long time against the Saracens, and afterwards the house of Anjou. About four miles northward of Corleone there is an extensive forest of ship timber, chiefly oak, which has for many years contributed to supplying the naval arsenal at Palermo. When the roads shall be improved, and the facility of conveying it to the coast increased, I trust that the British government will avail itself of this valuable resource.

On the road to Palermo, and within sixteen miles of that capital, you enter the *Piana de' Greci*, Plain of the Greeks, a town inhabited by a colony of Albanians, the descendants of several hundred families, who fled from Greece in the fifteenth century, to avoid Turkish persecution. The pristine originality of manners, customs, and religion, preserved to this day by this interesting people, has justly excited the admiration and curiosity of strangers, who seldom fail to visit this truly singular establishment. Living amidst the people of Sicily, they appear a totally distinct race, both in their moral and physical characters; I need scarcely say infi-

nitely superior to their neighbours. In addition to the satisfaction I experienced in visiting this place, it afforded me singular pleasure to observe, how much the dignity of human nature had been supported by the virtuous inflexibility of a people who had for so long a period withstood the vicious allurements which surround them.

Not far from the Piana there is a mountain, called Cometa, which abounds in a fine red marble, of which good specimens are to be seen in Palermo. The ancient Ieta is supposed to have stood near this, the inhabitants of which were so renowned for their courage. Some writers also assert, that the Arbela of antiquity must have flourished near the Piana de' Greci, whose population were remarkable for their lying qualities, and which gave rise to the famous proverb

"Quod non fies, Arbelas si te conferas."*

The town is delightfully situated on the side of a hill, and an extensive plain stretching below, gives employment and bread to nearly all the inhabitants, who live on the best terms with the people around them.

The means of travelling through the Val di

* Conversing with a Sicilian one day upon this odd saying, he observed very gravely, that the times had, indeed, undergone a great change, for the adage which could in former times be only applied to one city, might now, with strict propriety, be said of the whole island!

Mazzara, (with the exception of the roads lately made, and which only lead to Partanico, Termini, and La Figuzza, the seat of his Sicilian Majesty, and the Caserta of Sicily,) are attended with the same formidable obstacles as those in either of the other two Valli; consequently, travellers are discouraged from penetrating into the interior of this part of the island, which every where presents such romantic scenery and fertility of soil. There are many considerable towns towards the western extremity of Sicily, besides those already mentioned; amongst these I shall only notice Salemi, delightfully situated exactly in the centre of Sicily, between the Gulf of Castello Mare, and the opposite coast. It contains 12,000 inhabitants, and is extremely well built, possessing several useful institutions, and a great many convents and churches. The people live chiefly by agricultural pursuits, which, together with pasturage, are highly favoured by the vicinity of the river Bilici, which rises in the neighbourhood and joins the sea near Selinunte.

It is generally believed, that Salemi is built on the site of Halicia, one of the five free cities, which, together with Alesa, Centuripi, Segesta, and Panormus, were so closely allied to the Roman republic.

In closing this epistle I ought to add, that the foregoing can only be considered as calculated to give you a very limited and inadequate idea of the interior of Sicily, for there

are many other populous towns and villages which might be described, although it would only be a repetition of particulars such as those already stated. Indeed, there is scarcely a spot in any part of the island which is not celebrated for some great historical event, or noted as the source of poetical fiction.

LETTER VII.

———Hic vasto rex Æolus antro
Luctantes ventos tempestatesque sonoras
Imperio premit, ac vinclis et carcere frenat.

VIRG. *Æneid*, lib. i.

Description of the Islands dependant on Sicily— Lampadosa — Pantelaria — Favignano — Levanso—Lipari Islands, &c. &c.

Sicily, 1811.

THERE are a great many islands round Sicily, dependant on it, which although at present in a state of the utmost poverty, are so susceptible of improvement, that a short account of them ought not to be omitted in this proposed correspondence. I shall begin with Lampadosa, so much talked of after the Peace of Amiens, and which Buonaparte had the effrontery to offer to the British Cabinet as an equivalent for Malta. This island is about one hundred and thirty miles south of Sicily, and seventy west south-west of Malta. It presents nearly a level surface; is inaccessible on the

western side, and only twenty-one miles in circumference. Good anchorage is found on the south-east quarter near the port, of which a correct idea may be formed by a reference to the chart which I send you. From a careful analysis of the soil, and actual experiments made within the last three years, the ground has proved to be equally good, if not richer, than that of Malta, and offers the easiest means of being speedily brought into cultivation.

Of the former history of this island very little is known at present; but there is an old plan extant at Malta, which represents the harbour surrounded with a town; of this there are no traces left, except a castle much out of repair, and now occupied by the few Maltese who live on the island. The only memorable event more immediately connected with Lampadosa in modern times, is that of the celebrated Doria having taken shelter there with his squadron, after an engagement with the Turkish fleet, which was succeeded by a violent tempest. It was soon after made an appendage of the two Sicilies, and conferred in perpetuity on the family of Tornasi, who have ever since been styled Princes of Lampadosa, and are of course the legitimate proprietors. Unable from the state of Sicily to reap any advantage from its possession, a Mr. Gatt of Malta rented the island from them for many years, till some time ago the deputy commissary-general at the above island, made an agreement with him

to occupy a part of it for the purpose of being converted into a farm. Recent circumstances have, however, put Mr. Fernandes in full possession of the whole; but as if this comparatively insignificant spot was destined to be an everlasting bone of contention, law suits are instituted, both in the courts of Sicily and Malta, in order to discover who ought to be the future lords of Lampadosa. It is scarcely necessary to add, that these will never be decided.

If taken out of the hands of private speculators, it might become a very useful and even important acquisition to Malta, by the establishment of an extensive fishery, by protecting trade, and opening a commercial intercourse with the coast of Barbary, from which it is distant only sixty-one miles. Any one of these considerations would, it is imagined, be sufficient to excite the attention of the civil government, yet they all appear to have escaped notice. It is certain that the present plan is a very inefficient one.

The manner of deciding the fate of Lampadosa is in the opinion of many very simple. The Sicilian government can have no desire of retaining it; the Prince has derived no benefit whatever from it, and would cede it for a trifling pecuniary consideration to the British government; it might then be supplied with a small garrison, and peopled by the convicts condemned to imprisonment for a period of years at Malta or Sicily. By the possession of Lampadosa in this way, large supplies of

cattle could always be procured from the coast of Barbary, and fattened there for the consumption of Malta. A productive tunny fishery would also be a source of profitable speculation to any mercantile man, and would tend to reduce the present exorbitant price of that article.

There is another island, twenty miles off Lampadosa, but so very small and barren as not to deserve attention. A small rock, considerably above water, but very steep all round, lies four miles south-west of Lampadosa, and should be carefully avoided by navigators.

Pantelaria, the ancient Cosyra, is sixty miles south of Marsala, and about the same distance from Cape Bon, near Tunis. It is very high, and has a circumference of thirty-four miles. From the discovery of several medals, this island is supposed to have been inhabited by all the commercial nations of antiquity, particularly the Phœnicians and Carthaginians. It is mentioned by Seneca as desert and barren; but the experience of modern times proves that it is not without its resources. The remains of a volcanic crater are evident on one of the highest hills in the island; and a hot spring, called the Bagno, is celebrated for its quality of being usefully employed in bleaching linen; there is besides a mineral spring esteemed for its medicinal virtues.

The Count Ruggiero drove the Saracens out of Pantelaria soon after his conquest of Sicily; it has since that period passed through several families,

and was in 1492 granted to the family of Requisino, together with the title held by that house to the present day. There has always been a small garrison kept in the island for the purpose of defending it against the Barbary powers, and superintending the convicts, a number of whom are sent there from Sicily. The principal productions, which give employment and support to about 6000 inhabitants, consist chiefly of olives, fruits, and vegetables, cotton and corn; there is also an herb called orseglia, or orchil, which is used with great success as a dye; its colour is a very fine violet. There is a temporary summer anchorage in several places about the island, and a creek near the town, which might, with the utmost facility, be converted into a good mole for vessels of 300 tons.

The inhabitants of this island have been for a long time dreadfully exposed to the rapine and plunder of Barbary cruizers, who often land and carry away whole families. The melancholy case of these is a subject whose redress is worthy of the British government, and would render it deservedly popular in this little spot. The heights of Pantelaria are covered with a species of bastard oak and caper trees, which grow in great abundance: the former is used in making charcoal, but is well calculated for boat-building and other useful services.

Maretimo, the ancient Hiera, is situated about thirty miles west of Trapani, and has a circumference of twelve miles. Nature appears to have consigned this island to everlasting sterility, as

there is no trace of cultivation on its rugged surface. A castle built upon it has long served as a receptacle for convicts and exiles, for which it is admirably calculated.

Favignano and Levanso are within ten miles of Trapani: the former was called Ægusa by the Romans, and was a considerable naval station. You doubtless recollect the famous sea-fight there between the Roman consul Lutatius and Hanno, the Carthaginian, in which the latter was defeated. The anchorage on both sides of Favignano is so extremely good, that a large squadron of Venetians rendezvoused there during their hostility with the African court, and had the advantage of being supplied with good water and fresh provisions; benefits which a British squadron might also receive, should political events ever render it necessary to keep one of observation off the west end of Sicily. The anchorage is rendered particularly safe and commodious, owing to the extreme facility of getting out with any wind, and changing your position to either side of the island.

Levanso, between which and Favignano there is a safe passage, affords good shelter from northerly and north-west winds; but this little island is uninhabited.

There are, independent of several hundred convicts who are always kept confined in Favignano, about 2,500 souls, who inhabit a small town on the north side of the island. One part of it is extremely high, and upon this there is a strong castle, Santa Caterina, in which state pri-

soners, are kept, particularly those exiled by the court. The malefactors confined in this island live in a state of the utmost disorder and profligacy, being suffered to commit the most daring excesses without punishment, and are kept in continual idleness, while the most useful and necessary public works might be constructed, particularly a quay and mole: many are also suffered to escape; and I am confidently informed that numbers are now in Sicily, who are known to have been condemned to remain for several years in Santa Caterina. This is a point of vital importance, as connected with the execution of public justice, and will doubtless occupy the attention of an equitable government, if ever there shall be one established in Sicily.

Ustica, the ancient Euonimo, is about fifty miles north-west of Palermo, and contains a population of 1300 souls, who live by the cultivation of wheat, barley, soda, &c. There are some coral banks in the vicinity of Ustica, which the Trapanese occasionally frequent. Every effort to people this island proved ineffectual till the year 1761, when, owing to his Sicilian Majesty having caused a castle to be built, and offered some privileges to those who were inclined to settle there, some families went from Palermo. A great scarcity of spring water is remedied by cisterns cut all over the island.

The Æolian or Lipari islands, situate on the northern coast of Sicily, are twelve in number; of

these only four are inhabited. Lipari is only ten miles from the Sicilian coast, and is in a high state of cultivation. There is a large town built on its eastern side, which contains 10,000 inhabitants: the whole population is estimated at 15,000 souls, remarkable for their industry. The chief productions of this island are wines of different qualities, universally esteemed, and sulphur, which form very considerable articles of export: a sufficient quantity of corn, fruit, and vegetables are also cultivated for home consumption.

The bay of Lipari is a very safe anchorage during westerly winds; but, like many other parts of Sicily, the want of a mole is severely felt. A very considerable intercourse is kept up with Palermo and Messina.

Salina is four miles west of Lipari, and contains only a few hundred inhabitants. Large quantities of alum are found here, which is an object of export; there is also very good wine made there.

Strombolo is twelve miles north of Lipari; and there are several islands between them uninhabited. This has a circumference of only ten miles, and is highly cultivated nearly to the top. Wine is the principal production, and considered as equal to that of Lipari. The population exceeds 5000. The appearance of Strombolo is not unlike a sugar loaf, and the almost incessant flame which issues from its crater renders it one of the most picturesque objects imaginable, as also the unerring and useful guide of navigators.

Strombolo has of late years been of considerable importance to the Sicilian government, as a species of depot for the reception of spices; and as the principal means of keeping up the communication with Murat's government. The importance of placing there an Englishman of trust has often been pointed out, if only for the purpose of witnessing what is going on.

Vulcan is only separated from Lipari by a narrow channel, and is without inhabitants. The remains of its famous volcano are still seen by a continued smoke emitted from the highest part on the eastern extremity.

Even under the present circumstances, civil and political, of Sicily, the above islands add very considerably to its national wealth and resources; but whenever a favourable change takes place, calculated to remedy the numerous evils under which the mother country labours, the benefits will of course be extended to the Lipari and other islands, which are all capable of infinite improvement.

CHAP. VIII.

Sit hoc jam a principio persuasum; Dominus esse omnium rerum ac moderatores Deos, eaque quæ gerantur eorum geri judicio ac numine; eosdemque optime de genere hominum mereri, et qualis quisque sit, quid agat, quid in se admittat, qua mente, qua pietate religiones colat, intueri; piorumque et impiorum habere rationem.....Ad divos adeunto caste, pietatem adhibento, opes amovento.

Cic. de Leg. l. i. n. 15 et 19.

Antient State of Religion—Introduction of Christianity—Letter of the Virgin Mary—Establishment of Monasteries—Ecclesiastical Establishment—Religious Orders—Inquisition—Influence of the Ecclesiastics—Religious Extravagance—Monastic Evils—Celibacy—Ecclesiastical Studies—Female Education—Nuns—Ceremony of the Veil—Auricular Confession—Catholic Emancipation—Images—State of Morals—Monastic Luxury.

Sicily, 1811.

If we may judge from the relations of history, and the great number of temples of religion which are every where met with in Sicily, it is impossible not to conceive a very high opinion of the piety and devotion which marked the character of its former inhabitants; and although they were not favoured with the light of Christianity, it appears that a system of the most unlimited and enlightened toleration was the ground-work of their ado-

ration. Would to Heaven that so divine an example had been followed up in after-ages!

The first deities recognized by the people of Sicily appear to have been Ceres and Proserpine, not unlike the Isis of Egypt and Greece; but as on the arrival of the Cretans, their ideas of the Divinity became more expanded, temples were reared to Jove and the Dei Madri, which were afterwards succeeded by the host of Grecian and Roman divinities, that, together with these, had been honoured with an apotheosis. Numerous also were the tutelar gods amongst them: the *Dei Palicj*, *Numa di Adriano*, Venus of Mount Erix, and Diana of Segesta; there were, besides, many rivers to which the public adoration was directed; the Agrages of Agrigentum; Anassus and Fountain of Arethusa, at Syracuse; the Simetus and Acis, at Catania, together with many others.

Nor were the richness and magnificence of their places of public worship objects of less solicitude with the Sicilians, than with the most refined nations of antiquity, as proved by the account which Cicero gives of the numerous spoliations made at Agrigentum, Syracuse, Tindaro, and other places.

Christianity was supposed to have been preached at Syracuse, for the first time, by St. Paul, on his arrival there after the shipwreck at Malta. Having only remained there three days in that city,* it is not very probable that the new religion could have

* And landing at Syracuse, we tarried there *three* days.
Acts, c. xxviii.

gained many proselytes; that was reserved for the persecutions in the reigns of Dioclesian and other Roman emperors, which have, in every age, served to increase religious dogmas of every kind; but how much more so one whose basis was founded on the divine principle of "faith and good works." In its early stage, thousands fell a sacrifice to their opinions, and the martyrs of Sicily formed a very considerable portion of the community. The appointment of bishops, which took place in the time of St. Peter, could only be nominal, as the infant religion must have naturally been very circumscribed.

It would be quite ridiculous to detain you with an account of the various controversies with which the theological fathers of Sicily have for so many ages puzzled their brains upon matters so comparatively unimportant. The miracles of their innumerable saints and martyrs, together with the famous letter said to be written by the Virgin Mary to the people of Messina,* and the acrimo-

* The following is a literal translation of the Virgin's letter, as published in Bourigni's History of Sicily, which I submit to the consideration of those who are anxious to know any thing about the usual theological disputes in Sicily:—

"The Virgin Mary, daughter of James, the most "humble mother of our Lord Jesus Christ crucified, of the "tribe of Judah, of the race of David, health, and bene- "diction of God the Father, to all the Messinese.

"It being certain that, owing to your great faith, you "have, after a public deliberation, sent me these mes- "sengers; and since you admit that our Son is God and

nious contest between the inhabitants of Catania and Palermo, about the birth-place of St. Agatha, which was argued before the Pope, may do very well for the fathers of the church, and serve wonderfully to keep alive that spirit of fanaticism which still unhappily prevails.

The monastic life, which, I presume, had its origin in the pious zeal of the early promoters of the Christian faith, who saw the necessity of

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" also man; that he went up to Heaven after his resurrec-
" tion, as you have been instructed by Saint Paul, chosen
" as an apostle, we bless you together with all your city,
" and we wish to be always considered as your proctectress.
" The 42d year of our Son, that is to say, the 3d of
" June, and 27th of the moon, in Jerusalem."

Volumes have been written to prove and disprove the authenticity of the above extraordinary production; and instead of making any comment upon its extreme singularity, I beg to relate one of the ecclesiastical hoaxes resorted to at Messina, for the purpose of exciting a belief of its originality. At the very height of the controversy which agitated the churchmen, a Greek bishop, knowing the extreme credulity of the Messinese, encouraged a public hope that he would be able to find the original letter, and ordered that prayers should be offered up for that purpose; in the mean time, the ingenious prelate got an exact transcript written on parchment in Hebrew characters, which was buried several feet under ground, in a church at Messina; and having, on a fixed day, assembled a large concourse of people, he celebrated a high mass with the usual ceremonies; after which he pretended to be inspired, and was on the point of proceeding to the sacred spot, when the priests, jealous of their dignity, discovered the whole affair, upon which the bishop was under the necessity of making a precipitate retreat, to escape the just indignation of the people.

shewing examples of self-denial, in order to gain proselytes, and to excite the favour of Heaven, is said to have been introduced into Sicily during the fifth century, although it was not until the sixth that any certainty remains on record upon that point. When six monasteries were established in different parts of the island, owing to a requisition of Gregory, at that time Pope, they continued to increase progressively, until the successful invasion of the Saracens in 827, who took Syracuse, after a very obstinate siege in 878, when they were very nearly all destroyed, and not suffered to be re-established while those barbarians occupied the island; during which period, persecution of every kind was instituted against the Christians. Having been driven out by the enterprizing Ruggiero in 1071, the cause of Christianity experienced a most favourable change, from the great encouragement given to it by that distinguished hero, who appears, more in conformity to the superstitious spirit of the times than from personal piety, to have established the Catholic religion on the footing upon which it has since continued, and grown to its present extent.

When Ruggiero had succeeded in the conquest of Sicily, he was sensible of the necessity of securing the fruits of his labours; and in the division of property and power which he made, it is by no means improbable that he followed the example of his countryman William in England. A third of all disposable property was conferred

on the clergy; who were not only endowed with spiritual, but political, power, by the privilege to sit in parliament: the latter was an equitable rule, as far as it related to the levying of taxes, of which this body has since paid a regular proportion. Although my utmost efforts have, as yet, been unsuccessful in procuring authentic information upon a law of the island which limits the number of convents, yet I am positively informed that such a one exists; in fact, it would be preposterous to imagine, that Ruggiero, who displayed such consummate talents as a soldier and legislator, should have over-looked so very important a point, which a moment's consideration must prove to have been fraught with the greatest danger, and even calculated to give an immediate check to his conquest, by restricting population, and substituting a life of indolence to that of arms. Whatever might have been the restrictions imposed in his time, for the purpose of regulating the church, it appears that they produced no effect whatever, in limiting either the number of convents, or ecclesiastical benefices, which have increased to such an immoderate degree, that they have absorbed the best resources of the island, prevented any considerable increase of the population, and, as I hope to prove, substituted a mass of bigotted absurdities for the pure and exalted religion of Jesus Christ.

When the constitution came to be settled by Ruggiero, there were two archbishoprics, Palermo

and Messina; eight bishoprics, viz. Catania, Syracuse, Patti, Cefalu, Mazzara, Girgenti, Lipari, and Malta; established in the island and its dependencies, together with several priories and abbeys: all these were endowed with one third of the landed property, agreeable to the general division: there were also many churches re-edified and built by that monarch, which had also their share of benefices. The independence from pontifical influence in the election of bishops, and other church appointments, asserted by Ruggiero, was truly remarkable in a man who was endeavouring to establish himself in a country like Italy, and has excited a great deal of wonder, as well as applause; it has been continued ever since, while all the other catholic countries suffered the undue influence of the papal see. Another very equitable arrangement serves to prove the impartiality of that prince: this prescribed that none but natives of Sicily should fill the episcopal chairs: which salutary precaution was strictly adhered to until the reign of his present Majesty; confirmed, as it was, by the authority of Charles V. It is indeed true, for some reason which I have not been enabled to ascertain, that the father of his present Majesty, Charles III. made an exception, with respect to the appointment of bishops, in respect to the chair of Palermo; which was, in his reign, filled by a Neapolitan.

The religious orders which flourished principally, on the re-establishment of monasteries,

were the Benedictines, and Carmelites; which are, consequently, the most opulent in the island, and engross by far the greatest part of church property. That diabolical and sanguinary tribunal the Inquisition was established in Sicily by the authority and order of Frederic II.; a prince in whose character the superstition of the times formed the most prominent feature: his example was followed by Philip II.; and, above all, by Charles V., who sullied his well merited fame by its re-establishment in Palermo, after the populace, actuated by a noble and independent spirit, had destroyed it, driven away the inquisitors, and burned the archives, in 1556. The *Auto de Fé*, that execrable accompaniment, or rather daughter of persecution, was only performed three times in Palermo, although the horrors of the institution were not diminished the more in secret. In the year 1782, it was reserved for the Marquis Carracciolo to end a tribunal, the remembrance of which will ever be an irreparable stain upon the catholic religion. This celebrated triumph of reason over bigotry and persecution, was performed with a degree of solemnity which heightened very considerably the popular pleasure. His Excellency, followed by all the constituted authorities, a body of grenadiers, and an immense concourse of people, entered the sanguinary spot; and, breaking the prison doors, liberated the unfortunate captives; and, after having made a pile of the voluminous processes which had occupied the inqui-

sitorial bench, a torch was applied to it, amidst the reiterated cries of a joyful multitude. Amongst the prisoners, several were found who had been confined, on the most frivolous charges, for ten, fifteen, and twenty years; indeed, several of them proved their perfect innocence of any crime whatever; and traced their sufferings to the private revenge, or malice, of some powerful individual. A sentiment of the utmost sorrow cannot fail to be inspired by the contemplation of such a tribunal; so dreadfully wicked in itself, and so directly contrary to every principle of christian charity. In offering my tribute of admiration to the memory of Carracciolo, I am almost led to envy the happiness which that great man must have experienced in the accomplishment of such a beneficent work; one of those in which a statesman ever appears to the greatest advantage.

In the sketch I have given you of the coast and interior, you will have perceived how very numerous the convents and churches are in every part of the island. After minute inquiry and research, I have ascertained, that in the whole island, there cannot be less than eight hundred and fifty: one third are supposed to be women, independent of a great many retiros, or seminaries for the education of young women, which, from the mode of instruction practised in them, are not unlike the convents. The number of both sexes condemned to a life of celibacy is supposed to exceed one hundred thousand. The very relation of the fore-

going circumstances is sufficient to account for the state of Sicily. But there are many more to be added to prove, that the evils to society, true religion, and morality, arising out of so mistaken a manner of practising it, are infinite. It is peculiarly unfortunate, that all the absurdities which have crept into the religious tenets of Sicily, are likely to continue, until a change is effected in the system of public and private tuition; for it has hitherto been customary for none but ecclesiastics to superintend the education of youth of both sexes, and all the public libraries. These are, from the very nature of their own education, ever anxious to prevent the dissemination of all knowledge, except that which relates to the church: every rank of society is therefore kept in this state of delusion; and those who indulge in any idle asperity against the bigotry and superstition so prevalent amongst the people of Sicily, should consider before hand, the powerful causes from whence they spring.

One of the causes which will always keep up, and even increase, the immense list of ecclesiastics, arises, first, from an idea inculcated into the fathers of families, that they cannot secure the favor of heaven so effectually as by placing one of their sons or daughters in a cloister; a second, very generally practised rule, is that of persuading young persons to enter a convent in order to diminish the expense they might otherwise be to the family, and thus obtain their patrimony.

The above reasons account for the numerous troops of fine boys seen in all the towns of Sicily, and dressed in all the insignia of the religious profession, for the purpose of becoming friars: by these means the stock is continually kept up, and thousands of the rising generation made a burden to their fellow creatures, instead of entering the world for the purposes of contributing to the national prosperity.

It would require a large volume to detail the riches of the convents in this island, and the extravagant uses made of them by many. Several of those for females, in Palermo, keep country houses, to which they retire during the heat of summer. Others in the town hire a part of twenty or thirty houses for the purpose of making a covered passage to the Cassaro, in order to witness the processions. One of these has, however, gone further, not to be deprived of that gratification. This was not built in a situation which enabled the abbess to procure a communication by means of the adjoining houses; and a subterranean passage was made, at an expense of several thousands, which leads to a large house taken in the Cassaro, to gratify this extraordinary *penchant*.

The expense attending processions in Sicily is beyond calculation.

It is not my intention to enter into any argument relative to the innumerable evils and inutility of so large a portion of the population being devoted to the church; the experience of the

past, and the evidence of facts, are the most unerring guides for the public opinion upon this head; and while I consider it as an incumbent duty towards the people of Sicily to develope this subject as amply as possible, I beg it to be understood, that I am very far from entertaining the smallest wish of weakening their faith in a religion originally founded upon the divinest principle of morality, and the abuses of which are alone attributable to the weakness of after times.

The most prominent features of religious worship here, and from whence all its attendant evils flow, may be classed under the heads of celibacy, absolution, and auricular confession; these require a separate examination, though it will not require a very long one, to prove their fatal effect on the community, as practised in Sicily. It very often happens, that the most enlightened and useful precepts become deep sources of evil by the improper application of them to practical morality: that this position is exemplified by the doctrines of religion, a very superficial inquiry will, I think, amply demonstrate.

It has ever struck me as one of the most extraordinary events in the history of mankind, that celibacy could have either been tolerated or practised, when the precepts of religion, and examples of every age, went so completely against such a ruinous institution. Reflecting on the early characters and conduct of the heads of the church, nothing will convince me that a pure spirit of re-

ligious morality could have given rise to it. The adoption of celibacy, while it wars with all the passions and feelings of our nature, was a disobedience of the first precept said to come from the Divinity, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." Those who argue in favor of a single life should keep in mind, not only the example, but the precepts, of the founders of christianity; a reference to Scripture will shew them, that the great Jewish lawgiver considered matrimony as a primary duty, and there is no doubt whatever of his having enjoined it to every part of the community. The expressions of St. Paul are not, surely, of a doubtful or equivocal nature, relative to this very important point, "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." That this exemplary follower of Christ did not allude to the laity alone, the expressions to his friend, and, I may say, elève, are, I think, sufficiently explicit, "A bishop, then, must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach."

"One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity."

Again, "Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double tongued, not *given* to *much wine*, not *greedy* of *filthy lucre!*

Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

Even so must their wives be grave, not *slanderous*, *sober*, faithful in all things.

"Let the deacons be the husband of one wife, ruling their children and their own house well."

The foregoing sentiments, coming from such great and indisputable authorities, are, one would think, quite sufficient to remove the scruples of modern churchmen.

If, however, the adherence to a life of continency was the characteristic feature of the Sicilian clergy, it would, perhaps, in some trifling degree, extenuate their still continuing a life of celibacy: but the direct contrary is the fact; and a whole community is, by the nature of this cruel obligation, hurried into a continued breach of their religious obligation, to gratify the most powerful instinct of nature, excited, as it is in this island, by a degraded state of morals, and the force of universal example.

I now proceed to make a few observations upon the moral and political effects of the clergy's present mode of life, drawn from the facts which have for many years passed under my immediate view. A young man, whether destined to be shut up in a convent, or devoted to the more active duties of the clerical profession, being placed in some seminary, enters into the usual studies which are to fit him for the propagation of christian morality: this consists, exclusively, in a perusal of the fathers, lives of the saints, and all the other articles of his faith; which, unhappily, inculcate a

spirit of intolerance by no means in unison with the benign example of our Saviour. To the study of profane history, philosophical works, and polite literature, he is an entire stranger; particularly in all the convents, where these are excluded most rigidly. The exceptions to the above remark consist of all those who happen to be placed in libraries, professorships, and those who enjoy the higher dignities of the church; a very inconsiderable proportion of the whole body. Thus educated, how is it possible that they can entertain any other mode of thinking than that which they at present possess? Their education finished, they are ushered into society, and instructed to disseminate every principle imbibed during their tutelage. Those who are constrained to remain immured in the cloister, are still more strongly impelled to the lawless indulgence of passions which a life of solitude is so much calculated to call forth. Hence, innumerable crimes in secret, and so many acts of violence towards the author of our being. On the other hand, those dedicated to the duties of private confession, and the domestic instruction of families, never fail to form intimacies with the females, both single and married; whose minds are but too well prepared by the loose manner of their own education, the pernicious effect of example, and extreme facility of obtaining absolution. Many, also, are the infants who fall a victim to the illicit amours of young ecclesiastics, owing to the danger which must in-

evitably attend a discovery of their crime, only avoided by destroying the offspring of their connection. From sources of undeniable and authentic information, I am warranted in assuring you, that there are comparatively very few exceptions to the above practice, heightened as it is by the influence which religion always gives over the minds of a people buried in the darkness of superstition.

Unnecessary as it must be to dwell upon all the other evils inseparable from such a life it will be enough merely to point out to what a degree it must check population, and in how many ways, while every principle of religion and morality is so grossly violated. It is truly astonishing that so few, if indeed any, measures have as yet been taken to diminish such a gigantic evil.

While impelled by every sentiment of reason and humanity to wish for a total abolition of celibacy, it affords me very considerable satisfaction to know, that more than two thirds of the Sicilian clergy would hail such an event as the happiest period of their lives, and the most signal triumph of legislative wisdom over the ignorance and mistaken zeal of past ages.

The sentiments of a celebrated writer of modern times upon the monastic life cannot be too much admired, and his arguments are, I think, unanswerable:—"Le jeune homme qui a des talens, et qui les ensevelit dans un cloitre, fait tort au public et a soi-meme; qu' eût-ce été si Corneille, Racine, Molière, la Fontaine, et tant d' autres

avoient, dans l' âge où l' on ne peut se connoitre, pris le parti de se faire Théatins ou picpuces?" In another place, "On manque quelques fois d'agriculteurs, de soldats, de matelots, d' artisans, ils sont dans les cloitres, et ils y languirent." How truly applicable to the state of Sicily.

If, however, the laws which prevent monks from marriage, are subjects of commiseration, and so highly injurious to society, what must be the situation of the women? The manner of supplying the female convents here, so shocking to every feeling mind, and to the laws of civilized nations, is of too much importance to be passed over without very particular notice; and the veneration in which I hold that much injured sex, no less than a sense of duty, requires that I should take this opportunity of vindicating them, and of exposing their accumulated sufferings.

The education of females is exclusively in the hands of abbesses; and a young girl of any family, after having attained the age of six years, is invariably put into a *retiro*, which has all the restrictions of a monastery, except the privilege of being taken away when grown up. The teachers consist of an abbess, several old nuns and some confessors. The instruction, as you may well imagine, is altogether confined to an inculcation of the principles of the catholic faith, a perusal of religious books, and the most circumscribed rudiments of writing. They are only suffered to see their friends at stated periods, and no pains are

spared to induce them to take the veil: many are the victims who become the dupe of their fallacious arguments, and are thus snatched from all the ties of domestic felicity. Those who, from motives of good sense, or the persuasions of friends, reject the solicitations of bigotry, are betrothed to some husband, who receives his wife tainted with all the imperfections of monastic seclusion, a limited education, and total ignorance of the duties of domestic life. It is also an almost invariable rule with all the families having more than one daughter, to destine one for the veil, for the purpose of conforming to the long established idea, that by such a sacrifice the wrath of heaven is considerably mitigated. Another motive is, the desire of appropriating their dowries to their own uses. There are thousands of beautiful young women, who would be the ornaments of their sex, shut up from the latter reasons. The injury to the community is evident in every part of the foregoing statements, but it does not end there; the indolence and inactivity of seclusion destroy, in a few years, the most healthy constitution, which is succeeded by debility and consumptions that occasion years of sufferings and a premature end to more than half of those who have been induced to enter convents; the only plea of getting out into the world is that of ill health, and several have, of late years, instituted trials to prove that they did not take the veil with their own consent, which has, in every instance, been amply proved, and led to the

liberation of a great many: but there are still thousands of young women who have vainly supplicated deliverance.

To conclude this melancholy subject, I have to observe, that although many have attempted to justify the establishment of convents for men, it does not appear that any argument has ever been advanced in favour of shutting up women in the same way: and if there is still any legislator or politician who may be disposed to tolerate the continuance of convents, let him at least give his vote for the liberation of that sex whose imprisonment cannot possibly be of any use either to religion or morality, whose lives are a scene of continued distress, and finally, whose restoration to society will be attended with happiness to themselves, and utility to their fellow creatures.

The ceremony of a young nun's taking the veil is considered by the Sicilians as one of the most solemn in the island: it takes place usually at noon, and is preceded by the most magnificent preparations; new hangings are put up all over the church, the floor is covered with rich carpets, and a brilliant illumination gives additional lustre to all the surrounding objects; a grand orchestra with sacred music is composed for the occasion, and hymns are sung. After the celebration of high mass, the victim is brought in, drest in her richest attire, amidst a large concourse of people; when, after having approached the altar, and gone through all the mummery attendant on such occasions,

an occasional sermon is preached. The style of these discourses is, in general, truly ridiculous, and shews to what a pitch of ignorance the people of this island have been brought: the following is a true specimen of this sort of preaching, and is an exordium, translated from the original, which I heard delivered at Messina some weeks ago:—

"————And this is the new spouse destined for the Son of God! This is her whom the man of sorrow, the crucified Jesus, has chosen to be his wife. Besides, this is a victim consecrated to the luxuries and customs of the age. So many feasts, so many jewels, such flattery, so used by others; how can she ever become a virgin who wishes to marry him who condemned this world and all its pomps and vanities, saying, 'I pray not for the world,' &c. Ah! how have I been deceived, I thought to have found here a virgin wife, not gallantly adorned, but clothed in sackcloth, covered with ashes, and a crown of thorns on her head, endeavouring to please the spouse by trying to imitate his contempt of worldly things," &c.

Such are the expressions which accompany this scene. When the veil is taken, the abbess strips the victim of her jewels, destined for the use of the convent, and cutting her hair off close to the head, a veil is thrown over her shoulders; for the purpose of keeping up the sad deception, all those who renounce the world in this way are forced to assume an appearance of gaiety just as the ceremony is concluded; this, to the vulgar in Sicily,

has the appearance of inspiration, and being followed by an anthem, and Te Deum, the scene closes.

I now come to the second object of inquiry, "auricular confession," which will occupy but a small portion of your time. This instrument of crimes, and source of hypocrisy, is another proof, how the most perfect institution can be vitiated and turned into an instrument of iniquity, by the frailties of human nature.

The importance, and utility of confession appear to have been well known and highly appreciated by the earliest legislators of antiquity; as proved by the establishment of the mysteries of Isis, Ceres, Eleusinia, and others, before those which were evidently expiatory, and instituted to prove the unity of God, although they were, doubtless, disfigured by many superstitions, so natural to man: yet, when we read of Nero's being refused to participate in the mysteries of Ceres, while in Greece, such an event must form a very striking contrast with the practice of modern times; nor could I ever be induced to believe, that in the most degraded state of these mysteries, absolution was so easily obtained as it has been in our times.

It is to the innumerable abuses of auricular confesssion, as practised in Sicily, that I attribute nearly all the crimes committed by the community, particularly the lower classes: indeed, every rank of society in Sicily hasten to the auricular chairs; and after disclosing their iniquities, and paying a

sum of money, they proceed to a repetition of the very crimes they have just acknowledged.

The entire possession, in which the consciences of men and women are held by the clergy in this island, and its baneful effect in making the vices of a whole nation subservient to the views of priest-craft, cannot be too sensibly deplored; and its continuance, without a radical change, will inevitably produce greater evils.

How is it possible, I would ask, that the equilibrium of society, or the reciprocal duties of humanity, can be preserved, when the privilege of committing crimes emanates, as it were, directly from the authority of religion, a religion in itself so pure and beautiful, instituted for the divine purpose of promoting happiness and virtue?

It is scarcely necessary to repeat what has been so often related before, that the most heinous crime receives absolution by the mere ceremony of repeating a few prayers, fasting some days, and giving a douceur. This is an evil of such magnitude, so fraught with sacrilege, that it is astonishing a rational people could possibly be so debased and sunk as to tolerate it for a moment. Such is, however, unhappily, the fact; and until the people of Sicily are undeceived by the unerring hand of reason, there is no hope of their situation being in any manner ameliorated.

If the influence created by auricular confession extends to all the civil duties and actions of life, it is equally powerful in promoting any political

opinions which the clergy may be desirous of inculcating, either favorable to their own views or those of the court, and as the people look to them in every case for directions how to act, and are taught to believe it due to heaven that their orders should be implicitly obeyed, the conduct of any foreign power, however pure its motives may be towards the nation, has no effect whatever; their influence and popularity therefore, depend altogether upon the will of a few bishops, who are elected by the court, and dependant on its will; these communicate their wishes to the respective dioceses, and in the course of one week, the most important revolution might be effected by this extraordinary and dangerous instrument: that no very disastrous result has as yet been developed, is not to be attributed to forbearance, but an idea that less is to be expected from the system of Buonaparte, than from ourselves. The political events passing in England have, however, made a most sensible change in the public mind; and upon the fate of the catholic question, our influence in the Mediterranean, in my opinion, altogether depends. Upon this subject so vitally important to the future destiny of England, it will be necessary to trouble you with a few remarks, and in pursuing the foregoing topic, little more remains to be said than that the mode of confession is so wide a departure from the original institution, not only as practised by all the nations of antiquity, but by the law of Moses, and

dictates of all the apostles; that there cannot surely be any harm in wishing it to be restored to its purity, thereby to promote the true interests of religion. Independent of the burnt offerings detailed in the law of Moses, it is evident that the mode of confession was as public, being made in the temple, as that of expiation; and there are few, I believe, who do not see more real devotion in the Jewish passover, than in our own observance of Lent. That the most celebrated fathers of the church were inimical to the present mode of confession, which can be made to any one who wears the habit of a religious order, might be collected from many of their own works. The words of St. Jean Chrysostom are pointed and remarkable, as quoted by Voltaire.—" Je vous exhorte à ne cesser de confesser vos péchés à *Dieu;* je ne vous produis point sur un theatre, je ne vous contrains point de decouvrir vos péchés *aux hommes:* deployez votre conscience devant Dieu. Montrez lui vos blessures, demandez lui les remèdes; avouez vos fautes à celui qui ne vous *reproche point*, à celui qui les connut toutes, à qui vous ne pouvez les cacher;" and in his 50th Homily, what can be more self-evident than the following expression:—" Quoi! vous dis-je que vous vous confessiez *à un homme*, à un compagnon de service, votre egal, qui peut vous les reprocher? *non*, je vous dis, confessez *vous à Dieu.*" " It is to this incomparable philosophy and advice, that the useful and holy auricular

confession has succeeded," adds Mr. De Voltaire. If, on the other hand, the inhabitants of Sicily were to consult the dictates of common sense, deprived of all the false gloss of fanatical decoration, how monstrous it must appear to them, to think that the Omnipotent Ruler of Heaven and earth, would be capable of delegating his power to a mortal, however unpolluted or immaculate.

'If this was a professed dissertation upon the attributes of the Catholic religion, I should have entered into an examination of that part of worship which gives such unlimited encouragement to images. Their adoption was long a subject of dispute amongst the most celebrated fathers of the church, and it ought to be remembered, that a very violent schism existed for a long time between the Greek and Roman churches, which ended in a separation; and the decision of three hundred and thirty-eight bishops at Constantinople in the eighth century, which unanimously abolished the use of images, is a pretty strong proof that opinion and superstition have alone tolerated their continuance: indeed, it was two hundred years after the establishment of christianity before their use was resorted to. There can be little doubt but that their use is directly contrary to the written law of Moses, and to the wish of our Saviour, who, I presume, never imagined that those who embraced his religion would have defiled it by the adoption of molten gods, and so many other sacrilegious rights. Nothing can be

so idle as the reasons offered in extenuation of images: we are gravely told, that it is with a view of reminding us of the Deity that they are used; experience, however, has proved, that even in our time supernatural effects are apt to be attributed both to the pictures and figures of the Virgin and Holy Family; so apt is the vulgar mind to delusion. In fact, there cannot be much doubt of images having been adopted for the purposes of imposition, in order to support those who wished to live upon the credulity of their fellow creatures. Can any thing be more explicit upon this subject, than the words which are said to have come immediately from God.—"Turn ye not unto idols, nor make to yourself molten gods, I am the Lord your God."—Lev. xix., 4.

"Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters under the earth."—Exodus, xx., 4.

"Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor serve them, for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God." —*Ibid.* 5.

"Ye shall make ye no idols, nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land, or bow down unto it, for I am the Lord your God."—Lev. xxvi., 1.

It is not to be supposed that our blessed Saviour thought it necessary (subject as he was in

every particular to the law of Moses,) to add any thing to injunctions so strong and pointed as the above is; he knew, however, that false prophets, and false teachers would come after him; and his memorable words, "Beware of false prophets, which come to ye in sheep clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves—Matt. vii., 15, have been but too lately verified for the interests of the world and humanity. The observations of Timothy are no less striking to those who retain the smallest veneration for the holy scriptures.—"Now the spirit speaketh expressly, that in latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils."

"Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving, of them that believe and know the truth." If any thing can be called pointed, I think these two passages form an undeniable example. It will be said, that these have appeared before the public often before; my answer is, that they cannot be too warmly pressed upon the mind of a reflecting man, and I am amongst those who prefer looking for the line of my religious conduct in the pages of the New Testament, to going over the arguments of theological controversy, which at best only lead to indecision and uncertainty. Having said thus much upon a matter so important to the Roman Catholic faith, it is necessary that I should

further observe my object to have been solely directed to the detection of a practice that does not appear to be sanctioned by any rule of the religion of Christ, and a continuance of which is, above all other practices, calculated to keep alive the spirit of hatred and persecution so manifest amongst us. Every act of our Saviour and his apostles proves unequivocally their detestation of images; and there is not a single page of the New Testament in which the most distant trace of their toleration or adoption can be found. I am not, however, amongst those who advocate the abolition of those customs consecrated by ages; nor do I think that any sect should be persuaded to adopt the religion of another; "one man esteemeth one day above another, another esteemeth every day alike, let every man be fully persuaded in his *own* mind."—Rom. xiv. An entire liberty of conscience is the surest basis of general felicity; in this respect, I despise from my soul an apostate, whether in religion or politics, and am only anxious to see religion without bigotry, and devotion without hypocrisy.

There are some periods of the world at which men are more susceptible of the force of moral and religious truths than at others. The rapid dissemination of learning and philosophy has, I trust, prepared us all for a recognition of those principles, by which we may be alone enabled to live in future peace and harmony with each other.

In taking my leave of this subject it affords me real pleasure to add, that, whatever I may have been led to observe on the state of religion as practised in this island, there are many men of unexceptionable virtues and great talents amongst the clergy of Sicily; yet I am certain they will not deny, but that an uncommon relaxation of morals has taken place amongst the generality of their brethren. I know their sentiments, and it is of no trifling consideration to assert, that they have long deplored the evils of Sicily, with the necessity of reform; owning its importance in contributing to improve the lot of humanity. Experience, reflection, and benevolence, have taught them to look for a change, by which the future interest of the community can alone be secured on a basis of stability. The situation of any person now a member of the clergy, and who may be desirous of the wished-for change, is one of peculiar delicacy; he is in danger of being persecuted by the bigoted part of his profession, who believe that by touching a stone the whole fabric must fall to the ground; but this will never be the effect of any reform brought on by the religious themselves, though it would be inevitably so if that reform was left undone till the number and deformity of abuses were of such a nature as to become insupportable, an event not very far off; then would they have to lament calamities which a timely exertion of virtue would have prevented.

There are in the mode of living adopted by

many of the orders in Sicily, much to reprehend, while the example tends not only to make the meek and humble religion of Christ less venerable, but to bring the members of it into contempt. They appear to have altogether forgotten the example and precept of our Saviour and his apostles; and instead of despising the things of this world as stale and unprofitable, seem only intent on the accumulation of riches; for, independent of the contributions and endless extortions made upon the people by the worst means, more than one-third of the landed property in Sicily belongs to convents and churches, some having as many as from forty to sixty fiefs. The manner of administering these, and the not letting them, except upon short leases of three or four years, form some of the most serious grievances in the island. These facts account sufficiently for the backward state of cultivation, in which all the church-lands are. Many of the convents and churches have also large capitals in money, which are dormant, and completely lost to the public. Need it then be a matter of wonder that the island is apparently so poor? If the mere resources of the church property of Sicily were called into action, it would yield an incredible flow of national wealth and even singularly benefit the religious community; but they make a study of affecting poverty, although an examination of their dress, and the decoration of convents, churches, &c., amply contradict this supposition.

The Benedictine and Carmelite houses in every part of the island, have all the appearances of luxurious and superb palaces, vieing with each other in the number and elegance of their decorations. There are, however, many exceptions, and amongst the rest the Order of Capuchins and Franciscans, whose profession is poverty; this is, however, equally injurious to the public, as it throws several thousand beggars on them, who go about the country in troops. Besides the revenues of the bishops which are very ample, there are several abbies in the king's patronage, that yield a rent of two or three thousand pounds per annum; these are conferred on ecclesiastics who chance to be in favor with the court.

You may well suppose that there is a great deal of popular preaching in Sicily; independent of the sermons preached in the churches, there are a number of itinerant monks, who go about the country for the purpose of teaching morality and other Christian virtues. During Lent, the respective convents, particularly those of the Capuchins, send many of their fraternity into different parts of the island, who, after having delivered a certain number of pious discourses, make a handsome pecuniary collection, and return to their convents, loaded with the well-earned fruit of their industry. I have heard many of these reverend gentlemen: they preach in the Italian, a language totally unknown to the Sicilian peasantry, consequently their addresses are generally made without being

at all understood. Many Latin phrases are usually interlarded with their sermons, which make them still more unintelligible; the exordium and continuation are, however, so manifestly addressed to the passions, that it is, perhaps, better for the people that they do not comprehend what is said to them.

Some curious anecdotes are related of the Padre Arcire, one of the most distinguished popular preachers in Sicily: his labours were generally confined to the capital, where a number of sermons are preached every Sunday in different quarters of the town, particularly the *Quatre Cantoni*, where the Cassara and Via Macqueda intersect each other at right angles. The above holy father's method of illustrating his similes is much spoken of here. Amongst other instances of his eloquence, one day, in addressing a large concourse of Palermitans, he exclaimed, "Did you ever see Caliscibetta, (a living duchess, celebrated for her gallantries,) that lovely and fascinating woman?—then the Holy Virgin is infinitely more beautiful than she." On another occasion, when speaking to some carmen, "Now, my brethren, when you first get up in the morning, what do you think of? Why, your horses to be sure; aye, my friends, but the first horse is our ——, &c." Taking a basket of oranges, and placing a lemon amongst them, the Padre Arcire has been heard to say, "My friends, do you see these oranges, and that lemon in the midst of them? Well, then, this

lemon is our ——, and these oranges are the angels which surround him."

You frequently meet with monks who affect to be endowed with the gift of prophecy; others are inspired; and many troubled with visions:* a Dominican, whom I met at Milazzo, was of the latter description, and amongst several other frightful apparitions which he had seen, told me the following curious circumstance that had occurred to him in the course of his visionary speculations.

Taking a solitary walk one evening on the promontory upon which that town is built, and looking towards Mount Strombolo, he saw a man walk out of the crater, in whom he immediately recognized Henry VIII. who began to run down the mountain with the utmost precipitation. The monarch's flight was, however, of short duration, as in a few minutes no less a personage than the devil made his appearance, and looking round, soon perceived the fugitive, upon which he ran towards him; and getting up with his majesty, a violent scuffle ensued, which of course ended in Henry's discomfiture, and he was shortly conducted in triumph to the place of his former abode by the implacable Belzebub———

I can only view the manners, customs, dress, and riches of the Sicilian clergy as a total departure from the articles of their faith, and the express commands of their divine founder, and eminently displeasing to the Divinity.

Much more might be said relative to this

important subject. A superficial inquiry will fully confirm the truth of what I have advanced. The wish to avoid personality has alone prevented me from introducing many curious anecdotes in support of general assertions; my object is not, however, to expose individuals, or incur the epithet of a calumniator. For the veracity of what I have advanced, I appeal to Heaven, and the unbiassed sentiments entertained by all ranks of society in this island. A more powerful appeal it would have been difficult to have found; but I make it with an entire confidence of success, and in the hope that the contents of this letter may contribute, in some small degree, to the promotion of inquiry and reform. I shall conclude in the beautiful simplicity of Saint Paul.—"The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."

In the exposure of the foregoing extraordinary facts as contained in this letter, I am aware of having taken a liberty which may draw on me the obloquy of many persons, for whose moral and religious characters I entertain the highest veneration; but being placed in a situation wherein it was left me to choose between an act of duty and feelings of delicacy towards a body of his Majesty's subjects, whose religious tenets have so unjustly deprived them of their birth-right, I chose the former alternative, however repugnant

to those motives which bind me to the Catholics of my own country, amongst whom I was brought up, and whose manners and mode of thinking, Heaven be praised, are no more to be compared with those of their brethren in the Mediterranean, than light is to darkness.

Whatever degree of importance or impropriety they may be induced to attribute to me on this occasion, it is my pride to assure them, in the most unequivocal terms, that I shall ever be an enthusiastic advocate for their unlimited emancipation.

LETTER IX.

"Drag forth the legal monsters into light,
Wrench from their hands Oppression's iron rod
And bid the cruel feel the pangs they give.
Much still untouch'd remains; in this rank age
Much is the patriot's weeding hand requir'd;
The toils of law, which dark, insidious men
Have cumb'rous added, to perplex the truth,
And lengthen simple justice into trade.
How glorious were the day that saw these broke,
And ev'ry man within the reach of right!"

THOMSON.

Government of Sicily—Laws and Constitution of Ruggiero—Ancient Officers of State—Parliament of Sicily—Political Occurrences connected with the Loss of Naples—Courts of Justice—Civil Regulations—Prisons—Mode of Prosecutions—Torture—Conduct of the Courts—Injurious Effects of the Ecclesiastical System—Post Office and other Arrangements—Remarks.

Sicily, 1811.

THE greatest philosopher * of any age or country gave it as his opinion, that "the objects of those who govern ought ever to be that of rendering their subjects happy, by making them virtuous;" a sublime precept, and to which may be added the idea which Cicero entertained upon the same

* Plato.

important subject—"Tenes ne igitur, moderatorem illum reip. quo referre velimus omnia?—ut gubernatori cursus secundus, medico salus, imperatori victoria; sic huic moderatori reip. beata civium vita proposita est, ut opibus firma, copiis locuples, gloria ampla, virtute honesta sit; hujus enim operis maximi inter homines atque optimi illum esse perfectorem volo." But what must be the situation of that country whose government not only disregards these rules, but acts in direct opposition to them? This I firmly believe to be the case in Sicily, where the legislative maxim appears to be that of rendering the people miserable by making them more wicked. This must, however, be attributed alone to the degeneracy of the times, and not to the defects of the Government established by Ruggiero,* who, considering the

* This truly great man is amongst the few who merit the title of hero. Animated by the love of glory, and uniting all those qualities which make a man beloved by his fellow-creatures, he, from the situation of a private gentleman, raised himself to the dignity of a king, in the midst of envy and opposition. When possessed of power, Ruggiero was blessed with that rare and distinguished merit, of knowing how to make use of it for the benefit of others, and his own glory. He was born in Normandy in the year 1031; and, having finished a glorious career, died at Mileto in 1101, aged 70, equally and deeply lamented by Normans, Italians, French, and Calabrese. His remains were deposited in a church of his own dedication, and the following verse, so justly merited, inscribed on his tomb-stone:

Linquens terrenas, migravit dux ad amænas
Rogerius sedes; nam cœli detinet ædes.

The

age he lived in, was deeply versed in the art of governing. Having established himself in the island by force of arms, and the exertions of his brave followers, it immediately formed an integral part of his Italian dominions; and when crowned at Palermo, in 1130, he became King of the Two Sicilies, although that title was not assumed till the reign of Alphonso. Aware that the continuation of his power, and the happiness of his people, depended on the immediate establishment of equitable laws rigidly put into execution, he lost no time in assembling a parliament, composed of the three states, ecclesiastical, baronial, and military, before whom the form of a constitution was discussed: their chief guides appear to have been the Lombard

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The leading features of this monarch's character were temperance, bravery, and an unshaken love of justice. The estimation in which Ruggiero was held by his contemporaries is proved singularly by the letter of Pope Urban II., in which, after panegyrizing his virtues and talents, he accords to him and his posterity the privilege of being his legate. This was one of the most extraordinary events in the history of the Popes, and gave rise to a famous tribunal in Sicily, continued to this day, called the *Tribunale della Monarchia*, or, Tribunal of Monarchy, which decides all ecclesiastical causes, independent of the Pope's influence, and shews how jealous that hero was of his power. Urban's appointment of a bishop to Troina without Ruggiero's consent was the cause of his having obtained a privilege never accorded to any other sovereign of Europe.

His son and successor, of the same name, appears to have inherited many of his father's virtues; and he followed up the same system of government, entirely to the advantage and improvement of Sicily.

and Roman codes, as that of Justinian had sunk into oblivion. The sagacity and superior policy of Ruggiero were strikingly exemplified, in not attempting to introduce any manners and customs contrary to those already established by the ancient usages of the island; and when the great national council decided on a system of jurisprudence, it was submitted to the king, who confirmed all the articles they thought necessary for the future government of Sicily; of these, thirty-nine have been transmitted to posterity. Connected as they are with the present subject, it becomes my duty very peculiarly to notice them, in order to prove that there are admirable laws in Sicily, although they have been grossly violated:

The first of these laws, entitled, *De Sacrilegio Regum*, enacts, that the sovereign's conduct, and that of his council and deliberations, shall not be subject to the examination of individuals.

The third is entitled, *De Rapta, et violante monialibus illata:* the transgression of which is declared to be a capital crime.

The fourth is against public robbers and peculators of every kind; on defalcation, occasioned either by neglect, inattention, or premeditated appropriation of the public money. In the fifth their punishment is decreed.

The eighth and ninth enact penalties upon judges who shall be found to have made wrong decisions.

The tenth and eleventh relate to feodality.

The thirteenth enacts and points out the necessity of celebrating marriages with due solemnity, and of the sovereign's opposing those of a clandestine nature, from whence so much public misery emanates.

The fourteenth, no less important, is called, *De Administrationibus rerum Ecclesiasticarum post mortem Prælatorum*, and as confirmed by the succeeding king, appears to have been a most salutary law, to check the incroachments of the clergy; the whole of whom, together with all the religious houses in the island, were declared to be under the immediate jurisdiction of the crown. Several succeeding sovereigns of Sicily found it necessary to assert this right, continually opposed by factions and the ambition of the priesthood.

The fifteenth prohibits individuals from the erecting towers and castles on the demesne lands.

The sixteenth admonishes the judges to make a proper distinction of persons in those who are punished; and states, that the injuries done to the king's officers are considered as done to himself.

The seventeenth enacts, that no person shall be allowed to practise medicine without the approbation of government.*

The eighteenth orders that judges and notaries, or lawyers, cannot be enrolled in the number of

* Would that there was such a law enacted in England.—Vide Dr. Solomon's Guide to Health, and many other entertaining works.

military, except their fathers had previously followed the profession of arms.

In the following articles of this famous code, pains and penalties were enacted against robberies, murders, and all the other crimes incident to a state. The coining or counterfeiting money was declared a capital crime, also forging the king's seal and letters, and, in fact, forgeries of every kind; there were laws against adultery, and procuresses of every kind; another against husbands who accorded too many liberties to their wives, and then expected them to observe the most unspotted chastity.*

Having arranged the laws, it remained to establish the respective officers of the civil government. In doing this, France appears to have served as a model to Ruggiero. Seven great officers of state were accordingly appointed, and continued to administer the civil and political affairs of the kingdom until 1569, except the grand admiral, which office was not abolished till 1750.

The first of these was the grand constable, generalissimo of the troops, and endowed with the most extensive military powers: he commanded every one under the sovereign, and had a distinguished place in the council.

The grand admiral had a similar unlimited command over the sea forces, superintending the con-

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* ——"a' mariti, che troppa liberta accordando alle loro donne, le vorrebero poi d' un' illibata onesta."

Notes to Bourigné, v. iii., p. 200.

struction of ships, the levying of pilots and seamen, the increase and security of navigation and foreign commerce, defence of the ports and sea-coasts, the fisheries, &c. He was also charged with the administration of the whole nautical code, as taken from the Roman and Rhodian, and every thing relative to the interests of navigation.

The grand justice was an officer of great dignity, and presided over all the other courts of the kingdom, *particularly the grand court, at which he personally administered justice.* His insignia was a naked sword, which was carried before him and the grand constable in all great ceremonies. This officer was not unlike the Prætor of Rome, and in case of the sovereign's death became regent. There were, besides, two justices of the grand court, called *Luogo tenenti Reali.* Some time afterwards there were two grand justices appointed to administer the laws; their jurisdiction was divided into two parts, the one trying all causes east of the river Salso, and the other those west of it. They were impowered to try all civil and criminal causes, also those of high treason.

The keeper of the seals and public edicts was called grand chancellor, compared by some to the quæstor of Rome, and was possessed of great power. This place, it is observed, was never conferred in former times but on persons of the first talents, and esteemed for their virtues.

The grand chamberlain, or treasurer, more like

the quæstor than the chancellor, superintended the finances and civil list, and controuled the officers of the treasury and custom-houses, and the collectors. He also decided any disputes which might arise with respect to taxation and duties.

The next officer was styled grand prothonotary. He attended the king's councils, and presented all supplications and addresses from the people, expedited patents and diplomas, &c., also composed the royal edicts, and was at the head of the vice prothonotary and all the other law officers of the island.

The last of the seven officers of state was called grand seneschal, or high steward of the king's household, who was a member of the council, and superintended the domestic concerns of the king's palaces, state of the forests, armoury, &c.

The above officers formed the *Magna Curia*, and directed the whole civil, political and economical machine of government, until the year 1569, when, in the reign of Philip the Second, and during the vice-royalty of Avolos, Marquis of Pescara,* a total change of the civil and political

* This statesman was only acting in obedience to the orders of his sovereign when he altered the administration of government in Sicily. His patronage of men of letters has been highly exalted by contemporary writers; and, independent of being a good poet himself, he established a celebrated Academy, called the *Accesi*—no longer in existence. His manners were amiable, and conversation fascinating.

administration took place. This event was a proof, how dangerous it is in legislation to abolish, or do away with, the laws established by our ancestors; for ever since the period of this alteration, the administration of government in Sicily has been growing into its present state of disorganization and abuse.

The seven great officers of state being removed, the grand justice was replaced by an officer who assumed the title of president of the grand court.

To the grand chamberlain was substituted an officer called the president of royal patrimony;* the grand chancellor's place was also filled by a person entitled president of the consistory.

The grand admiral's situation became nominal; and as to the grand constable and seneschal, they were no longer of any use. Thus, by the caprice of a weak prince, this island was deprived of its great privileges, and has ever since been governed as a province.

The three above mentioned officers, assisted by another, the king's council, *consultore del governo*, formed a junta, in which the civil and domestic affairs of the island were previously canvassed, and all improvements submitted to the viceroy's consideration, who afterwards consulted the parliament.

There was also another attorney-general *(avocate fiscale)* appointed. Both these officers were

* See Mr. Leckie's work.

a sort of check on the administration of finance and justice.

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* I am indebted to a profound literary character of Sicily for the following hints, relative to the former legislature of that kingdom, and the reader who takes the trouble of perusing them, may rely on their being drawn from the most authentic and legitimate sources.

"The first ancient constitution of Sicily, of which we have any knowledge, was that established by the Greeks; but, although in general it leaned towards a democracy, yet we see that the governments of Syracuse, Agrigentum, and other places, were frequently subjected to the domination of tyrants. When the Romans occupied the island, they appear to have made no material alteration in the laws, knowing how attached the people of Sicily have ever been to the observance of national habits and customs. Our chief means of forming any idea of the civil and political code of the Romans, is by an attentive perusal of Cicero's oration against Verres, who makes several allusions both to the civil and economical laws of the island, by which it is evident that the government continued to be administered on the most popular basis during the preponderance of that power, which increased the privileges of many cities, declaring them free, and confirming the rights of others, which had been taken from them by their own countrymen. A highly esteemed work upon the ancient laws of the island, has been published by Pietro Brummano, entitled, "Vectigalibus Populi Romani," and contains a detailed account of all that is on record relative to this interesting subject. During the sway of the Byzantines, or Emperors of the West, it is believed that few alterations were made in the laws; and some which are handed down, have preserved all the appearance of having been framed upon the pristine customs of the people.

To the Byzantines the Saracens succeeded; the whole of their code formed upon the laws of Mahomet, has been preserved. A literal translation was long since anticipated by the literati of

It is now necessary that I should inform you of all I have been enabled to collect relative to

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Sicily, but that hope has been disappointed, and it is said that the Abate Vella's is only a mutilation, he having pretended that the original code confided to his care for the purpose of giving a literal translation was lost, so that the work he has given to the public is not considered by any means authentic.

When the Saracens were succeeded by the Normans, a system of legislation was compiled, by order of Ruggiero, and a large volume of institutes which have been illustrated by several Neapolitan Jurisconsults, was published in the reign of the Emperor Frederic II.; there is also a book, called his Register, found some years ago in one of the public libraries, it is entitled, Frederic's Register, "*Il Registro*," which contains several ordinances relative to the chase, forests, and custom houses; also rules relative to domestic economy.

During the one hundred and eleven years in which the island was governed by the family of Anjou, it does not appear that any new laws were made, at least nothing more than vague traditionary reports have been handed down to our time: and of that period it is only known as certain, that the government was marked by every species of oppression and tyranny.

It was, however, during the dynasty of Arragon, that the people of Sicily were blessed with a constitution which, if administered properly, would have secured them against the accumulated evils under which they now suffer. The universal suffrage in favor of Frederic, who was crowned by the people contrary to the will of James who ceded the crown to Charles of Anjou, gave rise to a most salutary code of laws, which made the Sicilian monarchy more limited than even that of England, as established by the provisions of Magna Charta.

Immediately after the accession of Frederic, it was enacted as the fundamental law of the land, 1st, that the parliament should meet once in every year; 2nd, that the going to war, or making peace, should depend on the will of the whole nation;

the parliament of Sicily, which appears to have been instituted for the wisest purposes, and on a

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3rd, that twelve barons,* chosen or elected by the respective communes, should be appointed annually, to enquire into the conduct of all the magistrates; and 4thly, that all the causes, whether civil or criminal, should be tried on the spot where they originated, by the officer appointed to each commune. 5thly, that three judges should make the annual circuits of the kingdom, to examine into the conduct of all the officers of justice, and all others, to see whether they had honorably discharged their respective duties. 6thly, that all public employments should be confered upon native Sicilians, *and never upon foreigners, who could only receive the privilege of naturalization by the unanimous voice of the whole parliament.* 7th, that the rich proprietors of each commune should alone contribute to the annona, or public stock of corn; that each town should have a *Monte Fromentaria*, or fund for buying corn; and that those who had not the necessary means of sowing, should be supplied with a proper quantity of seed, to be repaid on gathering the ensuing harvest. 8th, that the public burthens should be borne by the rich landholders, and men of capital; also, that each commune should contribute its proportion for the construction of ships of war.* 9th, that each commune should be at liberty to levy its own proportion of taxes upon those articles of produce and public industry which were peculiar to the place. 10th, that the respective universities should have the power of electing their own syndic or alderman, whose duty it was to expose and make known the condition of public affairs, and point out the necessities of the state.

The laws of Frederic II. further enacted, that the criminal code should be most rigidly enforced, and for this purpose four chief justices appointed by the Gran Guistiziere, made the circuit of the whole kingdom annually, and visiting all the com-

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* See Magna Charta.

most eligible footing, however much it may have degenerated since that period. Without entering

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munes they examined the proceedings and trials of the local officers, upon which judgment was pronounced and executed before the judge's departure; if the case was of a doubtful nature, then it used to be submitted to the grand justice, who in his turn referred it to the king. The privilege of the local judge, as captain of justice, extended to five years exile, or punishment to hard labour; this he could inflict without waiting for the examination of any other authority.

The judges were followed always by a suitable number of attendants, and amongst the rest an executioner.

I have observed, that a syndic was appointed by the voice of the people to superintend the local domestic economy, and see that the weights and measures were all correct. The financial affairs were, at the same time, conducted by an officer called Segreto.

The barons, guilty of a breach of law, were tried by twelve of their own peers; and the crimes of magistrates or judges, were amenable to a court of twelve barons chosen by the parliament, who tried them according to law, and pronounced a judgment which was approved of by the king.

The taxes were imposed, and called *donative*, gift or donation, by the parliament, which was composed of the three estates, viz. the ecclesiastical, consisting of archbishops, bishops, priors, abbots, and rectors, of each parish; the second, baronial or military, was composed of all the titled barons, obliged to perform military service, and who had been benefited by the sovereign.

The last consisted of all the syndics of each commune, who occupied their proper place in the parliament according to seniority; these were elected by the public voice.

The bishops and other prelates of the kingdom, were nominated to occupy their respective situations by the inferior clergy of each diocese, and when approved by the king commenced their functions. The foregoing formed the principal points of

into an elaborate detail respecting the history or antiquity of parliaments, a task to which I am

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Frederic's code, and if properly enforced, could not fail to insure the public happiness, while the prince possessed as much power as conduced to his true interests and glory." The person who favored me with the foregoing is a bright, though neglected ornament, of his profession; he concludes his communication upon the subject with the following observation.

"The Arragonese constitution established by the people, owing to the fortunate event of their having the right of electing a king, was the most happy period of public felicity since the days of Hiero or Timoleon, and might be called the golden age of modern times; but the wisest maxims and most perfect laws degenerate by degrees, and give place to disorder and licentiousness, which accounts for our having been stript of our dearest rights, and reduced to a state of misery unequalled in the history of any other country, either ancient or modern."

One cannot help being struck with the analogy which appears between the constitutions of the two countries. The jury and a free press, those divine palladiums of English liberty, are certainly wanting; but how very easily might they be supplied; and then where is the necessity of the Sicilian parliament asking for a British constitution? it is both irritating and absurd to enter the societies of the various cities, and hear the people extolling the laws and institutions of other countries without knowing what they consist of, even while those of their own, if properly executed, would answer the same purpose, if not infinitely better. Considering the danger of foreign innovation, and the extreme difficulty of adapting laws made for the people of one climate, for those of another which is so very different, it would have I think been difficult for the great Bentham* to

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* It is almost impossible to mention this extraordinary man's name without pausing; at once to admire his stupendous attainments in the divine and complicated science of legislation, and to indulge a feeling of regret, that such a man should be, as it were, lost to this country. What could have induced

altogether unequal, it will, perhaps, suffice to observe, that a similar institution is always amongst

whom the world is so deeply indebted, to have placed the liberty of the subject, and rational prerogative of the sovereign, upon a more solid foundation than the code of Frederic of Arragon. The people of Sicily would, however, do well, to keep the subordinate plans of our justly celebrated countryman in view, in the adoption of his plain and simple method of public instruction, principles of universal toleration, promulgation of laws, elective franchise, and finally, the establishment of his famous Panoptique; thus they will shortly vie with us in our highest sphere of legislative excellence.

But, alas! we are not always the best judges of our own interests, even in the most virtuous state of society; how, there-

Mr. Bentham to leave England, is a question that must occur to all those who read his works, the only spot in Europe where one might suppose his sublime talents could be most easily rendered useful to the community?

There is a mystery connected with this subject which I cannot divine. How truly humiliating to an Englishman is it, to read the following extract of his letter to M. Garran, a member of the French legislative body, relative to the establishment of his famous Panoptique.—"Voulez vous savoir à quel point est monté ma persuasion de l'importance de ce plan de reformation, et sur les grands succès qu'on en peut attendre. Laissez-moi construire une prison sur ce modèle, et je m'en fais geolier: vous verrez dans le memoire même, que ce geolier ne veut point de salaire, et ne coûtera rein à la nation; plus j'y songe, plus ce projet me paroit de ceux dont la première execution devroit être dans les mains de l'inventeur. Si chez vous on pense de même, à cet égard, peut être qu'on ne répugneroit pas à se preter à ma fantasie. Quoi qu'il en soit, mon livre renferme les instructions les plus nécessaires pour celui qui en seroit chargé et comme ce gouverneur de Prince dont parle Fontenelle, j'ai fait mon possible pour me rendre inutile. —*See vol. 3 of Traités de Legislation.* These were the memorable words of a writer who is certainly one of the greatest ornaments of his time, and who, if he had lived in the days of a Socrates or a Plato, might have been honored with an apotheosis. We can only repeat the old adage, "Tempora mutantur."—His able translator, Mr. Dumont, if we may judge from the manner in which he has executed his part of the undertaking, is well worthy of his original.

those, which the most enlightened nations of former times thought necessary for the security of political power, and most likely to preserve the civil liberty and happiness of the people: thus we read of the Elders amongst the Jews, of the Areopagus in Athens, and Senate of Rome. As to our own country, it will hardly be denied, that to the parliament, and that alone, influenced by the suggestions of a wise monarch, do we owe our present situation and past greatness.

The early people of this island were particularly fond of national conventions, as appears according to Fazzello, who notices one held at Gela, in the eighth year of the Peloponesian war. They were held afterwards very often at Catania, Syracuse, Palermo, and many other places. In latter times, and after the fall of Rome, the most barbarous nations of Europe were governed by popular councils of that description. Ruggiero, sensible of the

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fore, is it possible to expect radical reform or improvement from the very people who have been educated, as it were, in vice, and whose actual manners and customs it will be the object of a future letter to describe, as tending to elucidate my observations.

It was in the reign of Alphonso, which commenced in 1416, and who, by some historians, has been stiled the magnanimous, that the liberties of Sicily were first destroyed. Holding his court in Spain, and ruling at Naples, he knew that the agitated spirit of the Sicilians, or their vivacity, would require more checks than the constitution admitted of; he, therefore, not only began to govern by a viceroy, but raised large bodies of troops, appointed a number of new officers, and instituted that barbarous law of *Mero e misto Impero*, &c.

best method of securing the power he had so dearly earned by the force of arms, assembled a parliament at Melfi, in Calabria, soon after his conquest of Puglia; when a constitution similar to that of Sicily was settled. The example of that great prince has seldom been followed, and cannot be too highly praised; having conquered a country by his perseverance and military talents, how truly great to vest two thirds of the sovereignty in the people, and assemble them together for the laudable purpose of framing a code of laws by which they were in future to be governed. Such was the situation of Europe at that period, emerging from a state of barbarity, and shackled with the feudal laws, that there was not much wisdom to be expected from the enactments of a new parliament: and as Sicily has since been dealt with more like a province than an independent state, the people have been utterly unable to make those exertions which led to the prosperity of England: consequently, the Sicilian parliament still labours under the imperfections of feudalism; and has, comparatively, no claim to the title of a popular representation; which must ever prevent it from taking that interest in the fate of the lower classes of society, so necessary to their happiness. The elective franchise would, besides, give a degree of independence to this body to which it can never aspire in its present state, while the whole legislative system would assume a new and infinitely superior aspect. The new modelling of this

body is, in fact, what every rational man must desire, and upon which depends the future destiny of the island. My business, however, is to give you some idea of its present component parts and privileges; particularly as calculated to influence the actual government.*

* The persons who compose the present parliament of Sicily are as follow:

Braccio Ecclesiastico.	Archbishops	3
	Bishops	7
	Abbots	51
	Total	61
Braccio Militare.	Princes	59
	Dukes	27
	Marquisses	35
	Counts	27
	Barons	79
	Total	227
Braccio Demaniale	Total	43

The immense number of titled families who are in this island, and of whom two thirds have scarcely the means of existence, is an evil no less injurious to themselves than oppressive to the community at large; for thousands of fine young men, who, from foolish notions of family pride, are prevented from entering the subordinate walks of life, and embracing some profession which might lead to honor and opulence, waste their lives in the profligacies of the capital or great towns, a burden to themselves and curse to the state. In 1760, there were in Sicily, no less than one hundred and thirty-one princedoms, eighty-four dukedoms, one hundred and thirty-eight marquisates, and forty-six counts, besides innumerable barons. What a frightful oligarchy must not one tenth of the number form in a country like this, where a third of the whole landed property is vested in five or six fami-

The ecclesiastical branch, at which the archbishop of Palermo presides, is composed of archbishops, bishops, abbots, and priors.

The military branch is composed of titled barons, those who possess fiefs, and all who are subject to military service.

The demanial branch consists of deputies from the universities, cities, and lands subject to the royal authority, and is presided at by the prætor of Palermo.

The military consists of princes, dukes, marquisses, and barons, of which there are several hundreds; indeed, all those who possess fiefs are bound to military service, and all the other obligations of vassalage, consequently entitled to sit in the parliament. As might well be supposed, the power of this body was not, at first, very extensive; it was, however, considerably enlarged by succeeding monarchs; particularly Ruggiero, son to the count; William, surnamed the Good; Frederic II.; and Alphonso of Arragon; all of whom had the honor of ameliorating and improving the laws, both civil and criminal: but it was in the time of Frederic II.,* the father of his

lies. The various other inferences which will be naturally drawn from this short notice of the Sicilian nobility, render it unnecessary for me to dwell any longer on the subject.

* Frederick of Arragon was amongst the few monarchs of Sicily whose chief glory was derived from the happiness of his subjects; an able warrior, he had the peculiar good fortune to rescue his countrymen from the attacks of several powerful

people, whose reign terminated in 1337, that the parliament of Sicily assumed the true character of a free political body: this prince improved all the laws in his kingdom, established several new offices to facilitate the machine of government, and limited the rights and privileges of every department in the state, hitherto undefined.

The code of laws established by Frederic is very voluminous, and justly considered as the most valuable monument of Sicilian jurisprudence extant: but their observance has long been totally neglected; and openly violated. All these laws

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enemies, and at the same time successfully to promote the arts of peace by the blessings of civil liberty, so eminently conspicuous in the two laws which I have cited as above: remarkable for the skilful choice of his ministers, he was also religious without being superstitious; and the following epitaph, found on his tomb in the cathedral of Catania, proves how duly his virtues were appreciated by the people of Sicily, who think of his memory with exultation to this day:

Quid tumulus caperet FREDERICI nomina Regis?
Murus erat Siculis longe certamia, legis
Divinæ cultor, humani juris amator
Occubuit, scandit cœlestia regna viator
Aurea Trinacriæ sub te duce floruit ætas:
Nec potuit quisquam regni tibi tollere metus,
Que, Friderico, queant, rex, de te carmina fingi?
Dignus eras Siculis divorum nomine pingi
Sicaniæ populi mærent; cœlestia gaudent
Numina; terra gemit; Rex Fridericus orfani!"

There never was a monarch more deeply lamented, and his panegyrists have honored the memory of Frederic with the glorious epithets of, "Dolce consolatore degl' infelici, Protettore delle vedove e pudritore degli orfani!"

are contained in chapters called *Capitale del Regno;* and amongst innumerable others, which prescribe the relative duties of the prince and the people, two are remarkable for their force and utility, if put into practice; the first chapter explicitly declares, that the king cannot make war, nor conclude a peace, without the consent and approbation of the barons; in the third there is a still more important stipulation, this declares that twelve barons, chosen by the parliament, shall yearly examine the measures of the king, his ministers, and judges, and report the result of their proceedings to the three branches; who are then authorized to make suitable representations to his majesty. There are many others, which make the privileges of the Sicilians nearly if not equal to those obtained by the English barons from John; indeed, the rest of their laws bear a most singular affinity to the privileges of our own freeholders, who were empowered to elect exactly the same number of barons to perform a similar duty.

The sittings of parliament had not been regularly established before Frederic's reign; when it was settled that they should be held in future at Piazza once a year, on the first of November, when all the grievances of individuals were received, and forwarded to the sovereign, by the parliament. From whatever cause, which is not accounted for by the historians of Sicily, there were only two or three meetings at that place and Messina; Palermo and

Catania were generally chosen afterward; until the island was governed by a viceroy, since which it has, with very few exceptions, met in the capital. There is, however, a law which establishes that the parliament ought to hold its deliberations fifty miles from the court; an arrangement well calculated to prevent the influence which has, in late years, rendered this body a mere shadow of popular liberty.

The personal privileges of members are exactly like those of our own country.

They are called together by letters patent, signed by the king, and issued from the prothonotary's office one month before the day of assembling. Each member is bound by law either to appear personally, or have a proxy with a written document entitling him to vote for the absentee.*

The members of each branch sit in separate chambers, from which strangers are excluded, after having been opened by the king or his viceroy. The address generally consisted of the usual compliments from a sovereign to his people, and concluded with a recapitulation of his pecuniary wants; these being settled between the respective branches, and the supplies voted, they then proceeded to state the grievances and difficulties un-

* The period at which barons can enter the parliament is fixed by the constitution at eighteen years of age. Some instances have, however, occurred, in which people have been allowed to sit at fifteen and sixteen.

der which the country laboured; and drew up statements called, *Grazie concordat domandati* (Favors unanimously demanded); these were generally written in a very spirited stile, and contained whatever the body wished to say relative to the abuses, also suggested remedies, improvements, &c. These were signed and registered by the prothonotary and transmitted to the king, who sent his answers back through the viceroy, or governor of the island for the time being. But the most important parliamentary privilege remains to be mentioned. This is the practice of electing four members from each branch, which gives a species of uninterrupted perpetuity to the body. They are chosen at the end of every meeting, and are entitled, the Deputation of the Kingdom *(Deputazione del Regno)*; these having a suitable number of officers and attendants, enforced and superintended the levying of taxes, and all other subjects connected with the duties of the three estates.*

* It is very remarkable that no person holding a place or enjoying a pension under the government can sit in the parliament. This admirable rule was ever scrupulously attended to, except in one instance, and that was only for a very short period. It is said, however, that the first step of the present minister was to procure an order from the executive government of Sicily to dispense with that restrictive rule, that they might sit in the next parliament, and influence its deliberations. Should such an event take place under the auspices of a British minister, it will only give additional cause to the people of Sicily to believe that we are indifferent to their fate.

I should have observed, that the respective branches are in the habit of making separate addresses to the crown upon matters which relate to their particular body, and when any difference of opinion takes place, a paper is drawn up entitled *Atto de Dipenzo*, which the prothonotary signs, and transmits with the other documents. In looking over the parliamentary history of Sicily it is impossible to form any idea of either the talents or patriotism of its members, as no speeches are recorded; however, although the efforts of a Hampden and a Sidney have been unknown in this island, yet I have reason to believe, that this body has never been without men of profound political wisdom, distinguished eloquence, and great virtue.

The annual assembling continued until the appointment of a viceroy under Ferdinand the Catholic, in 1488, whose continuation in office was limited to three years, which rule has generally been observed with respect to the parliament.

The most spirited act of the Sicilian parliament was observable in late years, and which I cannot help noticing in this place, as upon the future execution of it must entirely depend the island's opulence and prosperity. I allude to the proceedings of the CXVII., opened at Palermo, the 5th of April, 1778, wherein, after voting the supplies, it is proposed that the following roads shall be commenced without delay:—viz.

1st. From Palermo to Girgenti, with a cross

road to the extensive carricadore, or loading place of Siculiana, twelve miles west of that place.

2nd. From Palermo to Sciacca.

3rd. From Palermo to Mazzara, with two cross roads, one to the loading place of Castello Mare, and the other to Trapani:

4th. The mountain road from Palermo to Messina, with cross roads to the principal trading places on the northern coast. Also to repair and make the Marina road fit for carriages and other vehicles.

5th. A road from Palermo to Piazza and Calatagirone, with cross roads leading to the towns of Terra Nuova and Licata, also from Piazza to the county of Modica, and from Calatagirone to Noto Syracuse and Agusta.

6th. A road from Palermo to Catania, communicating with the foregoing.

The whole length of all these roads was estimated at 700 miles, which allowing 1000 scudi, of three shillings each, for every mile, would in all only require 700,000, or £105,000 sterling; this was thought, at that time, sufficient to perform one of the greatest national benefits imaginable, and the means of procuring the necessary funds were pointed out to the viceroy, who was only requested to direct the convicts throughout the kingdom to be forthwith employed in carrying the parliament's wishes into execution. The work was accordingly commenced, and after having made capital roads a few miles out of Palermo, this monument of

legislative wisdom was totally abandoned, and the money has ever since been applied to other purposes. Should the parliament be again endowed with discretionary power, it is anxiously to be hoped that they will consider the immediate execution of the above decree as the most important act which could fall under the consideration of any public body, having for their object the interest of their fellow countrymen.

With respect to the parliament of Sicily, considered as a popular assembly, it will be seen, even from the above short sketch, that it is purely a feudal institution, without possessing a particle of the elective franchise, by which any public body can alone be supposed to represent the people.* To say nothing of the hardship and injustice of taking away the sacred birthright of so many millions, how can it be supposed for a moment, that a parliament constituted of vassals could ever freely assert the rights of their country, or be able to maintain civil liberty. Their personal liberty is, besides, invariably subject to violation, as in the case of the exiled barons, whose only crime

* The enormous disproportion of the barons to the other branches, besides their possession of from seven to ten and thirteen votes, according to the number of fiefs they have, must ever give them a preponderance in the deliberations which subverts altogether the power of the other parts. The parliament can, in fact, be now only considered as the mere shadow of representation, and more as an additional instrument of tyranny than any thing else, as the prince invariably directs all its movements.

was that of opposing the taxes imposed without the consent of parliament. On the other hand, what must be the feelings of all those upon whom the taxes are levied, if the parliament happens to be subservient to the will of the court, which has, unfortunately, been too much the case latterly? they have the mortification of contributing their property for the support of measures, often contrary to their interests, without any means whatever of redress; or the liberty of pointing out the hardships under which they may labour; for the lower classes are held in such a state of slavery themselves, that their complaints, if ever made, are treated with the utmost contempt and indifference. The whole of this subject is one of the most weighty importance; and, were it necessary, I might recite innumerable reasons to prove the inefficacy of the present parliamentary system; but the matter is too self evident to require a single observation from me. The question, then, remains, How is a change to be effected which would remove a whole nation from slavery to the enjoyment of civil liberty, and convert the creatures of despotism into the independent guardians of their own privileges? This is the great point upon which the fate of Sicily may be said to hang at present.

If men were virtuous, patriotic, and disinterested, the problem would be easily solved; but these are qualities which have seldom been the guides of human nature. "La raison est toujours

venu tard; c' est une divinité qui n' est apparu qu' à peu de personnes," is a just remark; the same may be said of patriotism, and although the barons of Sicily see the necessity of a total change in the parliamentary system, will they come forward and sacrifice the possession of personal power or influence for the general good? If they are capable of such an act, they will be handed down to posterity as the friends of humanity, and most singularly benefit their present situation, which is comparatively wretched to what it would become under a free government. Whatever opinion you may entertain in England upon this subject, there is not an individual here, who is unbiassed, and possessed of any talent, who does not assert, that the longer Sicily is without a free parliament and the elective franchise in its purity, the more easily will she become the prey of a foreign enemy, while her miseries of every kind must increase.

If, however, the three branches should unite, and shew themselves above party prejudices and venality, they have a glorious model before them in the parliament of Great Britain, as it was established by our ancestors; and in avoiding the evils which may have sullied the purity of that celebrated assembly, Sicily may once more become the theatre of science, arts, and commercial enterprise.

Leaving this subject, I shall now trouble you with a few remarks upon the other branches of the

executive government, previous to saying any thing about the criminal code.

Before the king's second flight from Naples, in 1805, this island was governed by the viceroy, who had a committee and secretary of the king's nomination under him, together with all the constituted authorities; there was, besides, a junta established at Naples, called the *Giunto Consultivu di Sicilia*, consisting of a president, who was always a Sicilian, four members, and a secretary: this board conducted all the affairs of the island in that capital, and acted as a species of intermediate agent between the people of Sicily and the sovereign; but it was of little utility to the Sicilians, having been chosen by the king, who invariably selected a creature of the court to fill the office of president.

Since his Majesty's residence at Palermo, the executive government has been conducted by four secretaries of state; one for foreign affairs, another for war and marine, the third for the interior, and a fourth for the finances: there is also another office of considerable importance, not unlike our steward of the houshold, he is called *Ministre de la Maison Royale.** Independent of the above, a council, composed of the ministers and seven of the principal barons, at which the king presides, constitutes what we call the privy council, but they are only referred to on matters of the greatest importance.

* This office being of French introduction retains its original designation.

I have already stated, that the laws of the island are collected in large folio volumes, and entitled *Capitoli del Regno.* Since the days of Frederic of Arragon, several hundred have been added to them, suggested either by the caprice or convenience of those who governed; for, unlike our constitution, it has been customary for a junta of the presidents of the respective courts to decide all legal points of difficulty, and those approved by the king have passed into laws entitled *Prammatiche,* that rank with the *Capitole del Regno,* although they form a series of the most heterogeneous contradictions, and when referred to by individuals, only serve to promote litigation, and place their cause in greater confusion than ever.

It was in the above monarch's reign, that the people of Sicily appear to have altogether new modelled the constitution, and by the extraordinary privileges obtained at that time, no person could have supposed that such a total degeneracy could have been effected.*

It is in comparing the civil and criminal code of this island, that the constitutional laws of our own country appear to so much advantage, and, very justly, make Englishmen the envy of other

* There is also another species of law under the title of *Circolari,* circulars, these emanate from any of the respective courts, and, founded upon some unmeaning quibble, or particular case, have been multiplied without end, communicated to the other courts; and form new grounds of precedent; it being of no consequence whatever, if they should happen to clash with the *Prammatiche,* or *Capitole del Regno.*

nations. When I have explained the manner of administering justice in Sicily, you will cease to be surprised either at the frequency of crimes, or the character of the people.

The task of developing the chaos of tribunals and juntas appointed by the constitution of Sicily to distribute justice, is one of the most difficult and complicated that any person could undertake; I can therefore only hope to succeed in giving you a very imperfect sketch of the "*monstrum horrendum*," which Mr. Leckie so happily calls the Tribunal of Royal Patrimony, and which I apply to the whole civil and criminal code of the island, whether as established in the capital, or at the other cities endowed with similar privileges.

This subject is so highly important, not only to the British government in particular, but to those individuals who may be tempted to sacrifice the advantages of their own happy constitution, for the rapacity and injustice of a Sicilian tribunal, that I feel myself called upon to enter more minutely into the subject than the limits of a correspondence like this might seem to justify.

The number of courts, juntas, and deputations in the capital is about sixty-six, containing in all not less than four hundred persons. The tribunals of public justice, and into which all causes of dispute are carried, are the following:

1. *Giunta de Presidenti e Consultore*, Junta of Presidents, &c., is composed of the presidents of the grand criminal court, of royal patrimony, consistory court, and king's council.

The above court is endowed with very extraordinary privileges, and only referred to in cases of extreme difficulty. It is this court that makes the laws, called Prammatiche; which, when approved by the king, are registered as fundamental laws of the kingdom; although often in direct opposition to the codes of Ruggiero and Frederic of Arragon. It would indeed be very singular if infinite contradictions did not occur in looking for precedents in these, for they now fill seven volumes in folio, and not more than one half are said to be in print. Without entering into the manifest absurdity of laws being made and multiplied *ad infinitum*, in this way, it will be merely sufficient to observe, that the respective presidents have always some clause to propose, arising out of the cases pending in their own courts, while the king's council, is a mere cypher, and still more often a passive instrument in their hands. This court is considered as one of the most formidable civil and political hydras in the island; being endowed with unlimited privileges, particularly in points connected with the law. I am confidently informed, that the members have, on more than one occasion, been appointed to examine the proceedings of Parliament!

The next court is entitled *Tribunale della Regia gran Corte*—Tribunal of the Royal grand Court; this is composed of a president, elected for life, by the king, three judges for the criminal seat, and three for the trial of civil causes; their continuance in office is limited to two years, and

previous to becoming judges of the grand court, they are supposed to have sat in all the lower ones. There are thirteen other officers filling the places of notaries, councils, secretary, &c, attached to this court.

The multifarious abuses of the grand court, would require a volume to explain them; there is not a voice in the whole island that has not, for many years, been raised against this tribunal; and instead of administering justice, the most enlightened and experienced lawyers in the capital, have informed me that it is altogether owing to the conduct and baneful influence of this court, that the whole island is kept in a continued state of litigation. There is scarcely any cause instituted throughout Sicily, that is not brought into the criminal and civil court; from the decision of the first, in criminal cases, there is no appeal, but civil ones, tried by it, have their appeal to others, to be hereafter noticed. With respect to the civil court, cases of every kind can be tried in it, and when once under the necessity of having recourse to this tribunal, the litigants may calculate on being temporized with, for years, however just their cause: the length of trials extends to ten, fifteen, and twenty years, but seldom less than four: repeated instances have come within my own observation, in which both the parties have expended treble the sum for which they entered the court; but flattered by the assurances of their advocates and attornies, they are tempted to re-

main until either their patience is entirely exhausted, or they have no further pecuniary means of carrying on the trial. If favored with a decision, the opposite party immediately refers to one of the other courts, where the whole process is renewed; from this, the sentence being often reversed, his opponent proceeds to another, and thus the matter is scarcely in any instance decided, except by mutual consent. The power of sequestering ever so large a property, and suspending a mercantile man's concerns, is enjoyed by the grand court and several others in an unlimited degree: the expences attending a civil or criminal process, are called *Proviste di Regalie*, and amount to immense sums, indeed the first step of the court is to sequester the property upon which there may be any claim; this remains in deposit until the affair is decided, without accumulation or interest being paid to the proprietor.*

The manner of conducting a criminal or civil process, is no less extraordinary, and contrary to all the laws of reason, justice, and common sense: previous to entering into a law suit, depositions are made before a notary public, the defendants are summoned, and answer the charges by similar documents; written testimonies are then made out by those who are called on each side to sub-

* One of the judges who presides at the Corte Capitaneale of Palermo, has been confined three times for insanity. Another has purchased the place of a judge for three hundred ounces, through the interest of a lady, called Flavia.

stantiate the charge and defence; it must be here observed, that owing to the want of legal examination, cross questioning, verbal evidence, and indeed all those judicial forms, which tend to the discovery of crimes in England, you may in Sicily procure, for a trifling sum, testimonies of every kind. When all the papers and other documents, are ready, they are carried before the judges, and left for their consideration by your advocate, who, in presenting them, enters into an argument upon the merits of his case, and is answered by the lawyer employed on the other side. The court being broke up, the judges take all the papers to their own houses; and towards eight o'clock in the evening, give audience to the parties in dispute, who respectively enter into the merits of their cases. In order to obtain admittance in, it is, however, necessary to fee their servants; and it it scarcely necessary to say, that those who can give an additional dollar, are sure of gaining entrance first, and often to the exclusion of the other party; I am positively assured, that the judges, during the time of their judicature, never think of giving any wages to their servants, who consider the situation as uncommonly lucrative without that. Several days pass in this way, when the court proceeds to give the sentence; in doing this, should one disagree with the other, two more are called in to decide the point; which, when settled, the party thrown out, has his appeal to one of the other courts; and, through the influence of his

advocate, never fails to carry the process there, where the matter is sure to be prolonged without end.

The next court is entitled *Tribunale del Real Patrimonio*, or Tribunal of Royal Patrimony; so justly characterized in Mr. Leckie's tracts. This most extraordinary instrument of tyranny and despotism, is composed of a president, king's council, the ministers of the toga, or jugdes, and three nobles, called *Maistri Ragionali*; together with a conservator, and several subordinate officers: the jurisdiction of this court extends to every thing connected with the national interests; but is more particularly intended to superintend the department of public economy, the rights of the respective communes, appointment of jurats, senators, and all other officers devoted to the care of public property. The appointment of president and the six ministers, judges, is for life; so that they are thus enabled to act with unlimited impunity, and have, for a long period, fully availed themselves of the colossal powers entrusted to their court. Whenever individuals have any claims on the public bodies, that is to say, universities or communes, their cause is legally entered into in this court, and after having gone through the usual proceedings, which differ in no way from that of the grand court, it goes where the appeal is made, and thence to the other tribunals. There is no institution or public department in Sicily so much censured or generally reprobated, as the court of Royal Patri-

mony; and its proverbial title, in Sicily, proves to what a degree the public hatred has arrived, for whenever any one mentions this court, they call it by the name of "Tribunale della confusione, del despotismo e delle Birbantarie." The whole of the taxes are at its disposal, as also the manner of collecting them, and a post seldom leaves Palermo without carrying off circulars to the different universities or communes, relative to some new arrangement in the domestic economy. Great jealousy has always existed between the deputies of the kingdom and the Royal Patrimony, the former having equal influence with the communes: both vie with each other in securing court favor, and act together as joint oppressors of the unfortunate people: they are invariably at issue as to the mode of raising the taxes, and regulating the financial concerns: this gives rise to innumerable circulars, ordinances, and missive letters, tending alike to promote civil discord and universal dissatisfaction.

The next tribunal, is called "*Tribunale del concistoro della Sacra Regia Conscienza*, or Tribunal of the Sacred Royal Conscience; and consists of a president, elected for life, three judges who sit two years, a notary, and counsel. This court was established in the reign of Charles V., and has the power of examining all the decisions made by the judge of the Royal Monarchy, in ecclesiastical affairs; there is also an appeal to it from the civil judges in the Royal Grand court, and then from this to the criminal grand court, until the three

sentences agree: the causes tried in the court of Royal Patrimony, have also their appeal to the *Consistory* court. The object of this institution is merely that of creating unnecessary expence, interminable delays, and all the other vexations of litigation. I have already stated, that the president forms one of the junta mentioned amongst the first of these courts.

The *Gudice de Monarchia*—Judge of the Monarchy, is an office appointed for life, and decides all ecclesiastical cases of dispute, which would otherwise be referred to the Apostolical Legate, an office which, in Sicily, has not been tolerated, and is filled by the above appointment; the appeal from it, as mentioned, is had to the Consistory court, and the only observation to be made on it, is, that the decisions are marked by the same procrastination which forms the leading feature of all the others.

I have next to notice the *Supremo Magistrato del Commercio*—Supreme Magistracy of Commerce, which is composed of a president, seven royal counsellors, a secretary and notary, this court, as indicated by its title, takes cognizance of all commercial disputes, whether on shore or at sea: there is an appeal from it to the others; and to know its innumerable imperfections, it is only necessary to inquire of any British merchant resident in Palermo.

The *Corte del grande Almirante*—Court of Admiralty, is composed of a judge and three other

officers. This court has, during the last four years, experienced some alteration, having had two judges appointed to discharge its numerous duties. A more iniquitous or illegal institution, if we may judge from the character of its decisions, cannot be conceived: it has been unequivocally subservient to the will of the court, particularly in the condemnation of an English ship, which in 1811 gave rise to the suspension of Mr. Fagen, our consul, and a most serious dispute, in which the queen's sentiments were amply developed, as well as those of all the court party. A defalcation of 40,000 dollars on the part of Troisi and Napoli, judges of this court, proves how well its affairs have been administered latterly.

The *Audienza Generale*, or General Audience, is held at the king's palace, and supposed to be presided at by his majesty, where all petitions, remonstrances, and appeals, against the delays or injustice of the courts are received. It consists of an auditor, counsellors, and solicitors. The importance of this court, under a beneficent and just government, would be incalculable; but in Sicily it only operates as a new source of venality, injustice, and abuse, so that few have recourse to its authority, and still fewer succeed in procuring any satisfaction from its decrees.

The *Protonajo del Regno*, or Prothonotary of the Kingdom, is a place of extensive patronage and great importance. His office is formed of assistants, coadjutors, secretaries, &c., to the number

of fifteen. The place of prothonotary in parliament I have before noticed; it only remains for me to observe, that this situation has been purchased from the court, and continued in the family of Papé for several years: the principal occupation, independent of his parliamentary duties, consists in appointing all the notaries in the kingdom, (except Messina and Catania, which have their own prothonotaries); and there being no less than one notary allowed to every thousand souls, you may easily imagine that they are not a few; however, as the situation is one which gives an extensive latitude of numerous impositions, the number of inhabitants in each town is easily exaggerated, and hundreds of people become notaries by the seasonable interposition of a bribe. In addition to the fees of office paid here, the prothonotary has, besides, the privilege of naming the officers of the universities, and jurats in the demanial cities, forty in number.

Besides the senate of Palermo, which is composed of six members, there is a captain of justice, *Capitano Giustezieri* and *Prætor*. Both these officers are endowed with very high judicial powers, and both preside at a court, which, though conducted by the same members, changes its title according to the nature of the cause submitted to their investigation.

The captain of justice holds his situation from the crown annually, and is allowed a salary; but, like that of our lord-mayor, wholly inadequate to

the expenses incurred by his appointment. Unlike the lord-mayor, however, his powers are by far more extensive, and both himself and those under him have a wide field of imposture, and abuse of the public, if not restrained by probity and virtue.

The *Corte Capitaniale* is composed of three judges and five inferior officers: their jurisdiction is merely local, and only extends to Palermo and its vicinity. All causes of a criminal nature, and attempts to disturb the public peace, are tried in this court, from whence there is always an appeal to the grand court.

It is called the *Corte Pretoriana* when presided at by the prætor of the city, elected annually by the court, and allowed a salary as inadequate as that of the captain. He proceeds to the trial of all civil cases within his jurisdiction, and from whence there is also an appeal to the grand civil court. By the institution of these two courts, a nobleman, however ignorant he may be either of law, or equity, or justice, is placed in a situation in which he is obliged to be the arbiter of the fate of all the inhabitants of Palermo and its vicinity, nearly 250,000 souls. Such a jurisdiction must shock the mind of every Englishman, and is rendered still more monstrous when I assert that, during late years, those who have filled these important offices, have been remarkable for a continued abuse of power and subservience to court.

Infinite are the juntas and deputations wh

might be added to the above list; and these are daily increased by the practice of the Sicilian government, which, in any case of the smallest difficulty, appoints either a junta or deputation, of which there are, I have been told, no less than about sixty; the greater part of these are altogether useless, and tend to create confusion more than any thing else, while they can only be considered as so many sources of corruption, iniquity, and peculation.

The other towns, villages, and capitals, of the island have all their peculiar local governors and laws, which it is necessary to notice before I proceed to give any further particulars relative to the civil and criminal code.

All the principal cities, towns, and villages, in Sicily (except Messina, Catania, Syracuse, Piazza, and Trapani, which enjoy the privilege of having their own courts) have a captain of justice, criminal judge, and *fiscale*, not unlike our king's solicitor, prosecutor for the crown. The object and duties of these three officers are to superintend the local police, detect crimes, and bring the guilty to justice. The captain, who has a certain number of constables, (called *sbirri* in this island,) receives information from them, and when any person is accused, or detected in violating the laws, he is imprisoned by order of the captain, who in his turn is obliged to render an ample account of his proceedings to the judge; and, on a fixed day, the law requires that all three should legally examine

the facts, and award punishment for the offence: the whole of this local police and administration has, however, long been vitiated to such a degree, that I should not have noticed it, except to shew that the constitution of Sicily has provided, however imperfectly, sufficient means of repressing crimes. The following particulars may serve to explain the present state of the foregoing institution, upon which the happiness and prosperity of individuals so eminently depends. The power of appointing the three officers is vested either in the *Avvocato Fiscale*, or attorney-general of the grand criminal court at Palermo, that of r— patrimony, and the baron who may own the town. Now, those who may be desirous of filling any of the three situations are known to make use of bribes and other undue means of procuring their appointment.* As they are thus endowed with a

* Considering the moral characters of those who occupy the situations of judges in Sicily, it is not by any means a source of wonder that they should give way to such a system of abuses, and be desirous of accumulating money in the way they do; for I must repeat that there is no salary or emolument from the state: they are paid by fees exacted on the trials which may be pending in the respective courts: and this accounts fully for the procrastination and innumerable charges which attend the most insignificant subject of litigation. There is, in fact, nothing in the laws and customs of Sicily so glaringly defective, as the circumstance of people in every department of the state being so scantily paid that they are under the necessity, as it were, of having recourse to peculation and plunder, in order to support the dignity of their situations and families; and wherever a latitude is given for a practice of that sort, it is invariably

considerable share of power, and have frequent opportunities of making money, in order to let off delinquents, or wink at the commission of crimes in others, the situation of fiscale, or prosecutor for the crown, is sought for in particular, as a latitude is immediately opened for that gentleman's entering into a wide field of illegal gain and peculation.* I am informed that as far as 250 dollars is in general given for the former offices either to the attorney-general of the grand court, or some of his followers.

Another great cause of the total inefficacy of

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taken advantage of. Indeed, in the present state of morality, people in office seldom are long in finding an excuse for their irregularities, however extensive.

* There is another species of jurisdiction in several of the baronial towns, designated by the title of *Mero e misto Impero*. This originated with the first kings of Sicily, but was seldom granted except to noblemen of the greatest merit until the reign of Alphonso, who, anxious to increase the power of the barons, and thereby render them more attached to his person, thought the best way of doing so was to increase their personal power and influence: that monarch made the above privilege very general; it consists of the barons going into the town where the privilege exists, and summoning a court of the three officers above mentioned, at which he presides, and is thereby rendered a criminal judge endowed with the power of taking away the life of his vassal at pleasure. The emblem of this disgraceful abuse of power, and liberty of trifling with the lives of thousands, is a perpetual gallows, erected at the entrances of the town where it is established. There are about fifty or sixty towns in the island in which it is still continued, while the others are exempted; the continuance of such a privilege is a proof of the island's situation, if any thing was required to illustrate the subject.

these local courts is occasioned by the grand court of Palermo having in late years directed, that both the depositions and prisoners shall be sent up to the capital for trial; so that the communes and people are thus forcibly deprived of their constitutional rights, and seeing themselves the passive instruments of the grand court, they only think of compromising with, and often screening, the guilty from justice, by means which it is not difficult to conceive. It is here where the great evils of the kingdom begin. No person possessing a particle of reason can be surprized at the island's situation, when informed of the many thousands who are sacrificed to the process of criminal prosecution.

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* The amazing numbers of lawyers, or persons devoted to the law, in Sicily, is another most serious evil, and only tends to involve the people in still greater litigation. Ever since the provincial courts have been spoliated of their rights, for their authority is merely nominal, thousands have flocked from all parts of the island to the capital, for the purpose of studying the law, well knowing that it must lead to opulence. The whole tribe which form the members of this profession are called *Paglietti;* the very repetition of which in any part of the island, but more particularly Palermo, creates a sensation of horror, and is invariably followed by the recapitulation of some grievance experienced by the conduct of a lawyer. Indeed, those who are best acquainted with the influence of this body on the public happiness and prosperity say, that to a despotic government they are better than a standing army in preventing unanimity, without being any expense to the state. This accounts for men of the profession being the highest court favourites, as they are better accustomed to, and longer tried in the arts of oppression.

There are three officers appointed by the grand court, called *capitani d'armi del regno* (captains of arms of the kingdom), one for each vale: these are sent round the island twice a year, in May and October, for the purpose of conveying all delinquents to the capital, and generally return with some hundred prisoners, who, on their arrival in Palermo are thrown into the public prison, and suffered to languish for years without having their cause decided.

I have mentioned in one of my preceding letters, that the great public prison of Palermo is called *La Vicaria*. Here debtors, robbers, murderers, and Turks, are alike immured. The form of the prison is above all others the worst calculated for every purpose of health and convenience. In the lower part all those people are confined who have been guilty of assassinations, or accomplices. On the second story, people accused of murders, robbers, and debtors, are confined: at the top there are, an hospital and the families of the keepers. Those on the lower, or ground floor, have no means whatever of ventilation, except that which comes from the court-yard in which they walk. The filthiness which is so remarkable in their dress, and the uncleanliness of the prison, are incredible; while their mode of living is such, as to be sure of engendering disease and every other imaginable inconveniency. The second range is divided into cells; and although there are windows which sur-

[illegible] is not the smallest regard paid to cleanliness.

The front of the prison is crowded with the relatives of those who are confined; these render it a species of market-place, selling the articles which the prisoners make out of straw, wood, &c. There are now in this prison 900 people, and of these there are about 100 convicted of criminal offences, upon whom sentence has long been passed, without any prospect of its being put into execution: this is occasioned either by the indifference of the judges, or some other species of influence exerted by the parties' friends. There are, besides, 700 more, who have been confined for periods of from one to six years, without any prospect of their cases being terminated; many of these, from every part of Sicily are confined for accusations of homicides, or the most daring robberies, and there are not more than one hundred confined for civil cases and debt.

Whenever any person is accused of committing a crime, he is ordered to this receptacle; and, whether guilty or not, is kept there upon the most vague and indecisive evidence. Those who have little property are followed to Palermo by their family, who are naturally anxious to liberate them; and in attempting to do this, hundreds are reduced to beggary, being often obliged to sell off all their little property to gratify the judges and lawyers, who keep them continually in suspense; while the accusers, on the other hand, prompted either

by a spirit of revenge or desire of extorting money, find no difficulty whatever in keeping the unfortunate people in this state of wretchedness. Should the prosecutors happen to be rich, they are enabled to gratify all their malignant wishes; and it often occurs, when unjust prosecutions or accusations of this sort take place, that after the accused have been reduced to a state of the utmost poverty, together with their families, the allegation is withdrawn, and the victims of persecution are even detained in prison to pay some additional expenses.

Amidst innumerable cases of the above description, originating either from private malice, or the will of some powerful baron, one instance struck me very forcibly; this was of a man who addressed me when one day at the *Vicaria:* this unfortunate person, although covered with rags, and fully exemplifying the poet's expression of "Sharp misery had worn him to the bone," had something in his appearance which indicated that he had seen better days; and he told me, that about five years ago he possessed a comfortable farm at a small town near Syracuse, called Floridia, where he supported a wife and large family of children. Some one who lived within a few doors of his dwelling happened to be murdered; the country people flocked to the place, and not finding any person on the spot, suspicion fell on the inhabitants of the neighbouring houses; they were consequently examined, and this man's being the next, the relatives of the de-

ceased selected him, and determined to gratify their revenge some where or other, made the charge; and, although unaccompanied with any kind of proof, he was dragged from the arms of his family, and taken to the capital, where he has been kept ever since: but notwithstanding his having brought unequivocal proofs of his innocence, and having been exonerated from the charge by several sentences, some new and frivolous pretext has enabled his adversaries to keep him in his melancholy situation. His wife and family followed him to Palermo, with the view of being near, and of administering some comfort to his sufferings: but the whole of his property has been swallowed up in the course of his confinement, and his wife and children reduced to mendicity. This story, offered to your consideration as an undoubted fact, cannot require a comment, and fully exemplifies the manner in which public justice is administered in this island.

The mode of instituting or conducting either a civil or criminal process by written depositions, is no less contrary to equity and the interests of justice, than all the other imperfections of the law; and the testimony upon oath before a judge, made by a person, no matter what his character or situation in life may be, who is desirous of ruining another, is sufficient to make you incur the expense and vexations of a long trial, particularly if without those pecuniary means necessary to bribe the officers of justice.

Where there is an insufficiency of evidence

in cases of criminal prosecution, the *damusa* is resorted to. This vestige of gothic barbarism and cruelty, can only be exceeded by the racks, and is by far more frequently fatal to those who are doomed to undergo the process. Damusas are attached to all the public prisons in Sicily, and consist of a cell cut under ground, just large enough to contain one person; the door is made of iron, and only two feet and a half high, so that the air is altogether excluded, except from a small hole at the top; the bottom is paved with sharp pointed stones. Those destined to experience this most inhuman and cruel trial, are put in here and loaded with chains fastened to the legs above the ancles, which often weigh sixty, and even eighty pounds. Bread and water are the only food or sustenance; and the prisoner's continuance there is extended sometimes to forty days, if not dead before: there are instances of people who have survived the damusa, but they are by no means frequent. It generally happens that an ulcer is created where the irons are put on, and in that case a mortification is almost sure to follow.

A shocking instance of barbarity, connected with this subject, occurred a few days ago: the captain of justice at San Juliano, put a poor man into the damusa of that town, against whom an accusation had been brought, but not substantiated by adequate proof; he was loaded with more than seventy pounds weight of chains, and, horrid to relate, his feet were in a few days literally worn off; the

man died, and his disconsolate wife came to Palermo, bringing authentic and undeniable proofs of her husband's innocence.

Who would have imagined that, after the works of a Montesquieu, a Beccaria, a Filangieri, and a Bentham, the system of torture, secret accusation, and unlimited imprisonment, could be sanctioned by a civilized monarch? To what end have those benefactors of human nature written? Another thought has frequently occurred to me with respect to the writings of these great characters, but is less applicable to Sicily than many other places; if what they have advanced on the inefficacy or inutility of capital punishment is really true in nature, how many thousands of our fellow-creatures have there not been sacrificed to the ignorance or prejudices of our ancestors? and how will contemporary or succeeding legislators account for the lives of so many people who might have been restored to virtue and penitence, while a long life of ignominy would have expiated, a thousand times, the crimes for which they became the objects of legal prosecution? This is a subject upon which I dread to enter. Let us cherish a hope that from the meritorious efforts of Sir S. Romilly and his coadjutors in the British senate, we shall live to see the day on which our own jurisprudence shall be refined to that degree of perfection, of which many say it is so susceptible. In persevering upon so momentous a subject, they will

however, whether successful or not, acquire an everlasting claim on the gratitude of their country.

I will not offer any further remarks upon this subject, and leave it to your sensibility to deplore the lot of that people who live in a country, the government of which, can patiently tolerate such a practice.

The situation of *Avvocato Fiscale*, or solicitor general to the grand court, is one of extensive patronage and influence, he is particularly charged with the prosecution of the banditti, who infest the interior. This office has long been filled by a favorite of the queen, named P————, a name which will be long remembered in Sicily. It is reported of this person, that in the course of last year he tore up the process against three *capi banditi*—head of banditti, who had been convicted of the most heinous crimes, for a consideration of 5000 dollars; and instances of a similar description are numberless.

Another might be added of equal notoriety; it was that for a douceur of a few hundred dollars, P———— suffered a young man to escape justice, who had been committing every species of depredation for four years before. The person who communicated the above fact, assured me, that there were scarcely any crimes, of whatever magnitude, (which in a certain stage of process through the court) could not be accommodated in this way.

The present *avvocato fiscale* has amassed a very large capital in the course of a few years. His secretary, and other followers have their peculiar mode of extorting money, and adopt an exact counterpart of his own proceedings.

I have seen a man, who, though the cause of an old woman being assassinated, was only condemned to twenty years exile in Favignano, while those who executed his wishes were hung.

In the civil court which takes cognizance of debts and all pecuniary matters, the abuses are innumerable, and in every case wherein a poor man is desirous of recovering any money from a rich one, he is obliged to have recourse to this court, where he is sometimes a month before he can prevail on the judges even to summon his debtor, although put to a considerable expense; if, on the other hand, a rich man wishes to prosecute a poor one, the whole vigour of the law is executed, and he is thrown immediately into jail, where he remains for years, as acts of insolvency are unknown in Sicily. This accounts for so few people being confined in the *vicaria*, as any person who can afford to bribe the law officers, can keep out of prison with impunity, and treat his creditors with the most open contempt. Several repeated instances have come within my own knowledge of persons having paid their debts and been retained a year afterwards to discharge some trifling expences of the prison.

The *maestra notaro*, or head notary, is another

officer of consequence attached to the grand court, and beside his duty of taking all depositions, he is intrusted with the care of convicts who may have been condemned to hard labour for a period of years. Many of these are, it is said, suffered to escape or join the army, in lieu of any soldier anxious to retire, and having a small sum of money to give away.

The *Pretore*, and captain of the city's courts, are loudly complained of in Palermo, as being fraught with the most scandalous abuses. Many assert that those appointed to carry on the inferior duties are in league with persons of the worst characters; the captains and pretores are also said to exceed their powers on all occasions, by keeping people in the local prisons at their houses, much longer than the law permits, without bringing them to a hearing. During the captainship of Prince Carini, a female favorite of his, Flavia, was continually in the habit of screening people from public justice. In one instance which occurred during a temporary visit to Palermo, a young man named Martorana, entered a tavern armed with a stiletto, which is prohibited upon pain of paying a large penalty, and in a quarrel stabbed another several times, he was seized and put into prison, to be tried by the captain of the city, but owing to 1000 dollars given to Donna Flavia, he was liberated!

The other prison of Palermo is situate near the mole, and appropriated to the reception of con-

victs destined to hard labour. There are about four hundred people in this place at present, and instead of being kept employed on any public work, or keeping the streets clean, they are in a state of continued idleness. The filth and consequent unhealthiness of the prisoners are uncommonly remarkable; like those in the *Vicaria*, they are suffered to hold an incessant intercourse with those who come to see them. Their rations, consisting of some black bread and coarse peas, are miserably scanty: and they are in general half naked.

A volume might be written about the senates, both in Palermo and all over the island where they are established. The members are generally composed of the younger branches of the noblemen's families. Instead of fulfilling the objects of their appointments, that of providing corn for the populace, anticipating scarcity, and preventing monopoly, they can only be considered as so many petty tyrants, tending to oppress the populace, and keep them in misery, by following the vices of the court.

At Palermo and other places, a senator is appointed in each month to superintend domestic economy; he regulates all the market prices, and it is well known that a most unjust use of this power is made by the intervention, of what the Sicilians call *un regalo*.

There are also other officers, called *Capitani di Piazza*, captains of the markets; these are ap-

pointed for the purpose of preventing shop-keepers and other venders from making over-charges; also to see that the weights are correct, &c. They are said to be in the constant habit of receiving a monthly bribe or stipend for winking at several abuses in this way.

The conduct of the senates at Messina, Catania, Syracuse, Girgenti, and Trapani, is a matter of such general notoriety, that I should consider it a waste of time to enter into a discussion of their uniform system of oppression and injustice. A reference to any of your friends who have ever visited this island, will soon satisfy you on this point; and, above all, the perusal of Mr. Leckie's celebrated work. In fact, the existence of such bodies are of themselves sufficient to obstruct the public prosperity and happiness, if not opposed by so many other causes.

In the inland towns the system of domestic government is no less reprehensible and ruinous to the people. A continued scene of violence and monopoly is evident throughout, and with the exception of Calatagirone, Piazza, and one or two other places, they are governed by the barons, whose feudal rights are practised in all the multiplied catalogue of abuses. The appointment of municipal officers to the baronial towns, is vested in the respective barons. These are usually selected from amongst those most remarkable for their disposition to oppress the people. The privilege of keeping inns and

Fondacos, is bought from the baron at a high and extravagant price; even the Massarias or Dairies where cattle are kept, are in general their property, and rendered a complete monopoly on many of the baronial lands. These privileges, which operate as a total bar to the national prosperity, and ranged under the title of *Dritti de Augaria*, forced rights, are rendered infinitely more oppressive than they were even intended to become; as a proof of this I shall only cite an instance wherein I myself saw the manner in which the unfortunate farmers of the inns, or *Fondacos*, in the baronial towns are treated. At a small village called Falcona, between Milazzo and Patti, which belongs to Prince Catolica, the legal inn-keeper rents it for the large sum of two hundred and twenty dollars per annum, upon the express condition that the prince shall allow no other house of the kind in the village, yet two more have been opened, by which the profits of this are so reduced as not to enable the poor man to meet his demand for rent, and a representation to Prince Catolica on the subject has been in vain. Similar instances are to be met with in most of the baronial fiefs.

The tyrannies practised by those who compose the municipal body in the country is incredible; but nothing is so truly abominable as the continued persecutions for the most trifling causes, and even murders committed at their instigation. The numerous acts of violence towards the women are

another source of oppression, and although *cuissage* is no longer in existence,* the methods adopted for destroying the peace of poor families is little inferior to it, and perhaps even worse.

"*Una Scopitata*" means being shot at from some ambush while you are walking or riding in the country. This is in Sicily the usual way of gratifying private revenge, and happens very frequently; it is indeed the common resource of the prince and the peasant. The price paid to assassins hired in this way seldom exceeds twenty dollars; half this sum is often sufficient to get any one shot; and if, as confidently reported, these were the means resorted to of dispatching a certain duke by his own kindred, who can be surprized at the custom's being carried through all the ranks of the community.

The people have another species of tyranny in the parish priests and friars, and from its combining both temporal and spiritual power, this is, perhaps, nearly as formidable as the other, and has a most powerful effect in extorting money, stimulating crimes, and various other acts of impropriety: not to mention the effect they have in

* The disgraceful and horrid privilege of *cuissage*, of which the French used fully to avail themselves formerly, is supposed to have been one of the principal causes that led to the celebrated Sicilian Vespers, one of the most important events in the history of Sicily, and more calculated to evince the character of the people than volumes of theoretical speculation.

keeping the people in a state of ignorance and superstition.

It ought to be observed, that although Messina, Catania, and the other towns, mentioned as having their own civil and criminal courts,* have the privilege of trying all local offences, yet there is an appeal from their decision to that of Palermo, and those who are not inclined to institute a process in these towns, are at liberty to try their causes in the capital. In having given a few instances of the manner in which justice is administered there, I think it altogether superfluous to enter into a description of the other courts throughout the kingdom, and shall only observe, that they are conducted still worse than those in Palermo, so that a case is scarcely ever decided in them without being followed by an appeal to that of the capital.

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* As connected with the government, the manner of conducting the post-office concerns in Sicily is particularly worthy of remark. The importance and utility of promptness, as well as security in this department, are too justly appreciated in England to require any observation of mine; it only remains for me to state, that the charge of conveying letters, money, &c., is confided to a Barone Milazzo, who farms it from the government for 13,000*l.* per annum.

Those employed to carry letters are required to give no security whatever; consequently, a year never passes without the postmen being robbed, particularly if charged with money, which people have formerly been induced to intrust with them. Late discoveries have made them wiser, but the evils of an uncertain and protracted correspondence are universally felt.

A further continuation of this subject, however important, will, I fear, be thought tedious, but being desirous of showing the system of civil and political government in all its deformities, I must, beg permission, to add a few more remarks upon a subject so interesting to the people of Sicily, and the rights of humanity in general.*

* If it was possible to approve of any thing connected with the criminal code of this island, I should be induced to admire the rarity of inflicting capital punishment, except in cases of the utmost necessity. This is a most important subject, and one which I do not think myself competent to expatiate largely upon; it is, however, rather singular, that in a country like this, where there is scarcely any trace of equity or justice remaining, its judges should think so correctly upon this matter, so long a subject of dispute amongst jurisconsults and philosophers. If I were permitted to offer an opinion upon a question of such magnitude, I should not hesitate to repeat with others, that the punishment of death is more an assumed than a natural right over our fellow creatures, however necessary and useful it may be in cases of murder, forgery, and high treason. I have always been led to believe that the sentence which condemns a malefactor to exile and hard labour for life is infinitely more useful to society, and effectual in preventing crimes of a certain magnitude,* than that which deprives him of a life that might otherwise be devoted to continued remorse, and employed for the benefit of society. I am also fully of opinion, that the chastisements invented for the good of the com-

* How much might be said in this place upon the criminal code of our own country, which consigns a person to the scaffold for stealing the value of five shillings!

The object of all laws is, I believe, generally supposed to be that of maintaining the equilibrium

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munity, ought to be so framed as to render an immediate benefit and advantage to that community; this is seldom if ever done by executions, which in every age and every country, have been unequivocally disapproved of by the most enlightened friends of humanity.

The reign of Elizabeth, Empress of Russia, which lasted twenty years without the infliction of death, is, amongst other proofs, strongly in favour of those who contend against the utility of capital punishment; and every one interested, either in the improvement or amelioration of society, must regret, that the celebrated author upon crimes and punishments should have made so little impression upon the legislators of some European countries. His chapter upon the foregoing topic is an unfading honor to humanity, and ought to be deeply impressed on the minds of princes. One of the concluding passages in that admirable paper, is so energetically persuasive, that I cannot resist the impulse of giving it to you in its original form.

"La voce di un filosofo è troppo debole contro i tumulti e le grida di tanti, che sono guidati dalla cieca consuetudine; ma i pochi saggi, che sono sparsi sulla faccia della Terra, mi favano eco nell' intimo de' loro cuori; e se la verità potesse fra gl' infiniti ostacoli che l' allontanano da un Monarco, malgrado suo, giungere fino al suo trono, sappia, che ella vi arriva co' voti segreti di tutti gli uomini; sappia, chæ tacerà in faccia a lui la sanguinosa fama de' conquistatori; e che la grida posterità gli assegna il primo luogo fra i pacifici trofei de' Titi, degli Antonini, e de' Trajani."

But if the voice of impartiality is led to offer a word in commendation of the Sicilian code, with respect to the delicacy observed by its judges in regard to the infliction of capital punishment, justice on the other hand demands, that I should add, it does not appear to be from motives of humanity or

of society by repressing crimes, promoting the practice of virtue, and thereby securing * the public

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justice that these judges act, if it was, how could they commit such shameful derelictions of every duty, as they are daily detected in. Their procrastination of causes, extortion of unjust fees, and universal venality, so well known and generally felt throughout this island, would do away with any expression of mine which might appear even indirectly favorable to them. Upon the continuation of that most horrible of all human institutions the torture, i. e. *damusa*, too much cannot be said, although to an English reader the bare mention of it is I am sure quite sufficient to create every feeling of detestation, and I have little doubt but my having noticed it in this way will produce some effect upon the British government. The idea of punishing a man before his guilt is proved, and forcing him to criminate himself, is well worthy of the barbarous age in which it originated, and upon this point I would also beg to call the attention of those, who, either in Sicily or any other country, advocate such a custom. In Becaria's disquisition upon it, his allusion to the practice of the Romans having permitted the use of torture upon slaves is truly happy, and with how much justice does he style the former masters of the world —"Vittime di una feroce e troppo lodata virtu."

* How little this is attended to here may be drawn from several instances. As to the quarantine laws of Sicily, in particular, they are merely nominal; but the important interests, which either their good or bad execution involves, is so great, that I feel it a duty to state how shamefully they are disregarded in the non-fulfilment of laws upon which the public safety depends in this country, surrounded as it is by several nations subject to the plague.

There is no established lazaretto in the whole island except at Messina, where it is situated close to the citadel, and not above half a mile from the city. The practices which take place there while vessels are performing quarantine are truly scan-

happiness: it is upon a constitution founded and administered upon this basis from which the poli-

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dalous. Goods of whatever description are permitted to be taken out of it for a small bribe tendered either to the guards or officers appointed to superintend its duties; passengers and the crews of ships have free egress every night; and I have seen persons sleep in the town of Messina while under quarantine from the most suspected places.

At Syracuse the abuses in this department are still more glaring; ships desirous of avoiding the quarantine of Malta put in here, where there are regular prices for obtaining pratique, according to the port you come from; the same is practised at Agosta. In Trapani a little more regard is certainly paid to this subject, but there too a douceur has its effect. With respect to the capital, the same may be said of the mode in which the quarantine laws are executed there as related of Messina; but, after the exposure of these facts, it may surprize you to hear of the rigidness with which the Sicilian government affect to regulate the quarantine. With them, it has for many years been a political engine, sometimes used for the furthering of their particular views, or to gratify a private pique. Thus her Sicilian majesty has been known to put the packets from England, and all other vessels that passed Gibraltar, into quarantine, although every symptom of contagion had ceased for months in that fortress, and all the Spanish ports; at other times I have seen a ship procure prattique, while vessels from the same place were ordered to remain forty days in quarantine.

Vessels are sometimes kept four months, until their cargoes are spoiled and the market lost. The effect of these dreadful hardships not only go to the ruin of individuals, but annihilate commerce. I once took the liberty, amongst other propositions which I made to Marquis Circello, of expostulating with him on the impolicy and absurdity of obliging vessels coming from Tunis to ride forty days quarantine instead of eighteen, the number required at Malta, and pointed out the impossibility of

tical strength of any nation can alone be derived, and all the other blessings which form the objects of our hopes and desires in this world.* Why then

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any extensive commercial intercourse being opened between Sicily and that state until this matter was eligibly arranged. After a thousand observations and difficulties started by his Excellency, he made the following singular proposition, viz. that vessels coming from the coasts of Barbary should put into Malta, and passing their eighteen days of quarantine there, proceed on their voyage to Sicily! It was in vain I endeavoured to persuade the Marquis that the cargoes of vessels thus putting into Malta would immediately find a market there, and be for ever lost to the merchants of Sicily.

* With respect to right of inheritance and primogeniture in Sicily, it differs very little from that of England in its general acceptation, but one part of it is infinitely superior to our law, and one of which the most enlightened legislator might boast. The younger sons are not, as in England, thrown on the world on the death of their parent, but have an entailed and constitutional claim on the family estates, which is here called *la piata*, or cover. For instance, when a nobleman dies; the eldest son is immediately vested with his father's titles and estates; his next brother is allowed two guineas a day, and has apartments in the palace, where his dinner is provided; a third gets one guinea per day, his room and diet. This admirable rule extends to all the males in a similar proportion, while the females have their *dota*, or dowry, consisting sometimes in a daily pecuniary allowance, and occasionally a sum of money. The effect of the above regulation is seen in every family through the island; the younger branches of which are enabled to support the dignity of their birth without having recourse to those expedients often resorted to in other countries, where high rank, when not attended by fortune, is more a curse than a benefit, and often operates as an exclusion to lucrative situations, or the means of procuring a tolerable existence.

should not the princes and legislators of modern times recollect these truths, and be guided by them in their mode of governing; they cannot be ignorant of that well-known adage, that sovereigns are established for the good of their subjects—"Ac mihi quidem videntur huc omnia esse referenda ab iis qui præsunt aliis ut ii qui eorum in imperiis erunt, sint quam beatissimi." The only way in which we can account for the fatal dereliction of this maxim, so evident in some countries, is by reflecting upon the general disposition in all human institutions to decay; and that the pernicious education of early life precludes the possibility of future improvement. There are, however, certain situations of unprecedented difficulty, and sometimes a crisis of such awful magnitude in the moral and political relations of a prince, that whatever his former mode of governing might be, yet his own future safety, and that of millions who are depending on his will, would, I should imagine, be an impulse sufficiently powerful to induce a change in his character, without calling to mind the sacred obligations of religion and virtue. There are, indeed, many other motives which the reflection must suggest to a sovereign whose kingdom presents such a sad picture of moral and political imbecility as this does; nor can it ever be otherwise while the system that brought on its ruin is continued. On the contrary, it is unquestionably evident to the most superficial observer, that, by an adherence to the present administration

of corrupt laws, this island must share the fate of all the continental powers, who have fallen at the foot of a lawless conqueror.

It would be altogether superfluous to enter into a more lengthened examination of the multiplied defects so evident in every part of the Sicilian government, where the sovereign's will is a law, and the administration of justice a mere object of commercial speculation, and this at the expense of religious obligations, moral duty, and public happiness. A further continuation of this subject might tend to express my own feelings upon the miseries of a people sacrificed as those of Sicily are; yet I find language unequal, in every instance, to express the shameful and horrid transactions which are daily rising before my eyes. I leave it, however, to your more enlightened judgment to form an opinion upon the probable result of such a state of things; and whether, if they are not speedily remedied, by an adoption of the most energetic measures, our government can hope to find any benefit from the occupation of an island, the inhabitants of which cannot possibly be attached to us if we do not ameliorate their condition.

To his Sicilian majesty, if an humble individual might hope to be heard, or even permitted to approach his sacred person, I would say, that the Almighty had delegated to him a power that ought to be exerted for the welfare and happiness of his people; that in the general wreck of empires, he had experienced the melancholy lot of princes, by

being deprived of a part of one of the finest kingdoms on earth; and that the only means by which he could ever hope to regain his losses is by giving the blessings of civil liberty to his faithful Sicilian subjects, thereby adding a glory and lustre to his name which would go down to the latest posterity. If I could further hope to be heard, I would address his majesty in the elegant simplicity of Fenelon, and call his attention to the following important truths, written for the instruction of one who sprung from the same illustrious family.

" Mais qu'elle détestable maxime que de ne croire trouver sa sureté que dans l'oppression de ses peuples! Ne les point faire instruire, ne les point conduire à la vertu, ne s'en faire jamais aimer, les pousser par la terreur jusqu'au désespoir, les mettre dans l'affreuse nécessité, ou de ne pouvoir jamais respirer librement, ou de secouer le joug de votre tyrannique domination; est-ce là le vrai moyen de régner sans trouble? est-ce là le vrai chemin qui mène à la gloire. Souvenez vous que les pays où la domination du souverain est absolu, sont ceux où les souverains sont moins puissans. Ils prennent, ils ruinent tout; ils possèdent seuls tout l'état, mais aussi l'état languit; les campagnes sont en friche et presque désertes; les villes diminuent chaque jour; le commerce tarit. Le roi peut-être roi tout seul, et qui n'est grand par ses peuples, s'aneantit lui-même peu-à-peu par l'anéantissement insensible des peuples dont il tire ses

richesses et sa puissance. Son état s'epuisse d'argent et d'hommes : cette dernière perte est la plus grande et la plus irréparable. Son pouvoir absolu fait autant d'esclaves qu'il y a de sujets. On le flatte, on fait semblant de l'adorer ; on tremble au moindre de ses regards ; mais attendez le moindre revolution ; cette puissance monstreuse, poussée jusqu'à un excès trop violent, ne sauroit durer ; elle n'a aucune ressource dans les cœurs du peuple ; elle a lassé et irrité tous les corps de l'état, elle contraint tous les membres de ces corps de soupirer après un changement ; au premier coup qu'on lui porte, l'idole se renverse, se brise et est fondée aux pieds. La mepris, la haine, la crainte, la ressentiment, la defiance, en un mot, toutes les passions se réunissent contre un autorité si odieuse. Le roi qui dans sa vaine prosperité ne trouvait pas un seul homme assez hardie pour lui dire la vérité, ne trouvera pas dans son malheur aucun homme qui daigne ni l'excuser, ni le défendre contre ses ennemis."*

Every line in this passage is so strikingly applicable to the state of this island, that I hope to be excused the liberty of having introduced so long a quotation ; my object is, however, to illustrate the subject of these letters by every thing which may appear calculated to obtain that end ; and where the sentiments of a man, no less renowned for his virtues than profound wisdom, can

* Télémaque.

be brought in the aid of political remarks, we are, I think, called upon to adopt them in preference to our own ineffectual efforts to persuade.

From the civil and political government of Sicily I shall proceed to attempt a description of the manners, customs, and character of the people so intimately connected with the former; and in tracing these you will probably see that the degree of vice prevalent in any state depends altogether upon the good or bad character of its government.

LETTER X.

The proper study of mankind is man.—POPE.

Manners and Customs—Persons and Habits—Dispositions—Mental Qualifications—Fair Sex—Costume—Society in the Capital—Education—Connubial Customs—Domestic Arrangements—Conduct of the Nobility—Further Observations on the Effects of Education, and on its Defects in Sicily.

Sicily, 1811.

ALTHOUGH the study of human nature is by no means so easy as many people imagine, yet, as I believe, experience has proved that none is more instructive or entertaining, it becomes peculiarly the duty of travellers to dedicate a large share of their attention to this subject. For my own part,

I know of nothing that creates more pleasure than the prosecution of inquiries, which not only make one acquainted with the present state of the society in which we live, but enable us to trace the causes that may have led to its degeneracy or influenced its improvement. Wherever my destiny has hitherto led me, I could not help observing that the people's character and mode of living bear the strongest possible affinity to the nature of their respective governments. It would, perhaps, be hazarding too much in the way of opinion, if I asserted that the manners and customs of all nations seem to be the mere effects of a cause centered in their governments. The former, whether good or bad, must be acknowledged to depend almost entirely upon the rigid and impartial execution of justice, which can alone be successfully opposed to the progress of vice and moral turpitude: this remark is fully exemplified in the decline of all the great powers of antiquity; and when we admit that a relaxation in the laws is invariably followed by the degeneracy of a people, no one will be surprized at the following picture of a people, that were once the envy and admiration of surrounding states.

The authors of antiquity,* but more particularly their celebrated poets, dwelt with particular

* Plato, after his return from Syracuse, is said to have given a less favourable account of the Sicilian character; but his censure of islanders was general.

satisfaction upon the wondrous attributes of this island. Amongst the rest, Lucretius, so often quoted by the Sicilian writers, describes it in these terms:

"Insula——triquetris——
Quam fluitans circum magnis amphractibus æquor
Ionium glaucis aspergit virus ab undis:
Angustoque fretu rapidum mare dividit undis
Æoliæ terrarum oras a finibus ejus:
Hic est vasta Carybdis; et hic Ætnea minantur
Murmura flammarum, rursum se colligere iras;
Faucibus eruptos iterum ut vis evomat igneis;
Ad cœlumque ferat flammai fulgura rursum;
Quæ cum magna modis multis miranda videtur
Gentibus humanis regio, visendaque fertur,
Rebus opima bonis, multa munita virum vi.

If the perusal of this forcible and energetic description excites admiration, the reader is irresistably led to contrast the past with the present; and in doing so, sentiments of mingled melancholy and regret cannot but be felt by all who have had an opportunity of personally examining the Sicilians of the present day.

Those of our countrymen who come here either for the purpose of instruction or amusement,*

* It is much to be regretted, that travelling should, in our time, contribute to the ruin, rather than tend to the advantage of our young countrymen, whose object in coming abroad is, or I presume ought to be, that of carrying home the well earned fruit of observation and study, to be employed for the benefit of their own country. The general mode of living adopted by the majority of English travellers is, above all others, the worst calculated either for their own improvement, or that of raising us in

usually give way to the most illiberal expressions of censure against the manners and habits of the people, without considering for a moment either the causes or motives which have vitiated them, and made them what they are. When, however, it is considered, that from the earliest period of the Sicilian history, the island has been a bone of contention between rival powers, none of which appear to have been guided by a very liberal policy, and many, particularly in modern times, making it the object of oppression and plunder, every possible allowance ought to be made for

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the estimation of foreigners: this we daily observe in Sicily, where a masquerade, drinking party, or faro table, appear to possess more charms than all the fascinations of intellectual pleasure, heightened, as it must be, by the classical ground of Sicily. Without dwelling upon this subject, upon which I can say nothing either gratifying to my own feelings or that could amuse, I beg to introduce four lines taken from the wall of an inn at Athens, and which is frequented by all our tourists, of whom, with very few exceptions, it may be considered as an exact picture; it is offered more for its point than elegance:

> Fair Albion, smiling, sees her son depart,
> To trace the birth and nursery of arts,
> Noble his object, glorious is his aim,
> He comes to Athens, and he writes his name!

Some of our countrymen, however, more enlightened than the rest, have instituted a new order, or club, in that seat of ancient glory, and into which no person can be admitted who has not resided three months in the birth place of Socrates and Pericles; the insignia is a ring, made of a species of steel, and upon the centre of which is stamped the image of an owl!

that propensity to deceive and impose upon others, which some have attached to their character. They possess, in my opinion, more forbearance than any nation I ever heard of; and when, on a late occasion, I expostulated with a literary friend upon the passive docility of his countrymen, he very ingeniously answered, that, "like the lion, the people of Sicily were not easily irritated, but if once roused, their efforts would be the more terrible."*

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* The famous Sicilian vespers, upon which so much difference of opinion prevails, tend, in a great measure, to prove this assertion. That awful event, which happened on the 30th of March, 1282, has created a most unfavorable idea of the Sicilian character in the minds of some authors. Without any intention of justifying such a horrid massacre, a slight perusal of the many atrocities on the part of the French, which led to it, convince me there is a point of forbearance beyond which a people cannot suffer. Historians are unanimous in stating, that there was no species of outrage left uncommitted by the governors and soldiery of Charles of Anjou, into whose possession the island fell after the death of his rival Manfred. Amongst other intolerable acts of cruelty, was that of using violence with the women, in every part of the island; cuissage was enforced by all the men in power; and Ludolfo, Governor of Mineo, insisted that a virgin should be brought to him every week; Ferdinand of Artois was equally licentious: but it is more than probable that had not the inhabitants been warmly stimulated by the Emperor of Constantinople, Paleologos, and Pope Martin IV. who gave Giovanni de Procida every encouragement to prosecute his daring enterprise, and even supplied him with large sums for that purpose, the vespers would never have taken place. The address and dexterity with which Giovanni prepared the populace for the

But, to fulfil the object of this communication; the people of Sicily are generally of a low stature,

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coming event is, perhaps, one of the most extraordinary circumstances connected with the history of any country. If the plan was premeditated, which many writers deny to have been the case, giving as a reason, that the massacre continued for several days, the signal for attacking the French was not unlike that which roused the people of Rome against the Tarquins. A beautiful girl, the daughter of a Palermetan, going to church, was seized by a soldier, who uncovered her bosom, on a pretence of searching for a stiletto, when her cries drew a large concourse of people together, and her father, whose name was Mastrangelo, being a man of great bravery, coming up, and seeing the way in which his daughter had been treated, exclaimed aloud, that the French were no longer to be borne with: upon this, the populace, who did not require much irritation, instantly armed, and, forming themselves into three bodies, attacked the garrison, whom they put to the sword indiscriminately. The clergy are said to have shewn a greater spirit of revenge on this occasion than any other part of the community: it is related of them, that where they suspected a female of being pregnant by a Frenchman, she was immediately killed, with the most aggravated cruelty. It is singular, that where there had been such causes of outrage on the part of the Sicilians, they could have made any distinction amongst their superiors; yet, such is the power of virtue and moderation in a man who governs, that out of so many thousands destined to gratify popular fury, Guillaume de Pôreelet was spared for the excellence of his character, and even provided with a ship to carry him to France; he had been Governor of Calatafimi, for several years. Another Provençal, named Filipo Scalambro, is also said to have been suffered to escape. The garrison of Messina avoided being sacrificed by the strength of their position, and timely escape into Calabria. The total number put to death is stated at eight thousand. Procida was, some years after the vespers, made great chancellor of

seldom exceeding five feet seven inches in height; of a dark complexion; and exceedingly well made; their abstemiousness is proverbial; and, although no people are fonder of good living, inebriety was almost unknown before our arrival; since which time, though not frequent, I have observed a much greater inclination, amongst a certain class of the community, and higher orders of society, to drink freely. An insatiable spirit of revenge, excessive warmth of imagination, and insurmountable cunning, (by themselves well known under the appellation of *Scaltrezza Siciliana*,) are the prominent features of their moral attributes. In a physical point of view, little can be said in favor of a people so enfeebled as they are by the long and baneful operation of defective laws, and a corrupt government: this accounts sufficiently for their incapability of undergoing much fatigue, extreme fondness for a life of inactivity, and uncommon disposition to remain in their own island.

The national diet, which consists of a celebrated paste called macaroni, is very well calculated to

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Sicily, and sent to Rome to justify the people for what they had been forced to do by the tyrannical and oppressive government of Charles, who, as the historians of Sicily assert, whatever were his military talents, was a most feeble politician.*

* The Sicilians, in order to be certain of whom they sacrificed during the above massacre, obliged those who were only suspected of being French to pronounce the word *ciciri*, a species of pulse, and which none but a native is capable of articulating distinctly.

promote both health and strength. Their beverage consists of the small wines, of which there are such a quantity and variety made in the island. Spirits are scarcely ever used amongst the people in the interior; and to the lower classes of society, animal food is almost unknown. The *menestra* is an universal Sicilian dish, like that of the *olla podrida* of the Spaniards; it consists of vegetables, macaroni, and sometimes small fish stewed up with oil, garlick, &c.; and to those who are not slaves to our roast beef and plumb pudding, such an assemblage has often afforded the utmost satisfaction. Another article, which is a great object of sustenance, consists of the tunny, and all other kinds of fish, of which the Sicilians of every class are passionately fond. Their meals seldom continue for more than half an hour, which in summer is followed by a nap of about two hours, this practice, during the winter season, is altogether confined to the old people.*

* The *gastronomique* art has been brought to considerable perfection in the higher circles of Sicily, it being customary, as in France, to satiate the appetite with a continued succession of highly seasoned dishes, which are, in general, so acceptable to the gourmands of this island, that, when the cloth is removed, they have no alternative except that of going to bed, for the purpose of avoiding the unpleasant effects of having indulged too freely. However, with all their fondness for the ragout and macaroni, I have never seen a Sicilian evince the least objection to our less fascinating, but more substantial, roast beef; on the contrary, they invariably find our beef steak pie, and surloin *eccellentissimo!* Indeed, their attachment to the English mode of

But though extreme longevity is not very peculiar to the natives of Sicily, yet, generally speaking, there are few districts in which instances of persons arriving at the age of eighty or ninety do not occur: the usual length of life does not, however, in general, exceed from sixty to seventy.

Upon the characteristic bravery of this people there exists a great variety of opinion: to this important point I have paid very particular attention; and as my ideas upon the subject are founded upon very close and actual observation, I trust it may be considered more applicable to fact than if it had been the result of vague and indefinite inquiry. In examining this part of the Sicilian character, how forcibly the influence of a good and bad government upon the character of a people is exemplified! Place a regiment composed of Sicilians officered by their own countrymen, in action, it is almost certain that their ranks will immediately be broken, and themselves put to flight: put English officers at their head, and give them the pay and sustenance of a British soldier, I venture to assert, that the troops of Sicily would, ere long, equal those of Buonaparté. In the flotilla employed for the defence of Messina, the conduct of the Sicilian seamen, whether under the British

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living has been frequently carried rather too far; and, in gratifying a well known Sicilian *penchant*, I have seen persons of the first distinction fulfil the prophecy, "that a remnant of all shall be saved."

or their own flag, has been marked with great intrepidity, and deserves the highest panegyric. I feel peculiarly happy in thus having had an opportunity of bearing testimony to their bravery and talents so eminently displayed during the last three years. From having seen the foregoing instances almost fully confirmed, and received the opinions of those whose local knowledge and long experience in the island, give them every claim to attention, I should not hesitate to consider personal bravery as inherent in the Sicilian character, however much it may have been suspended by the melancholy but inevitable effects of an imbecile government.

Upon the mental qualifications of the people of Sicily, a great deal might be said. Some degree of attention to the subject convinces me, that although their civil and political disabilities have for many centuries opposed an insuperable barrier to the successful exertion of genius in this island, yet nature, ever true to her first principles, has endowed them with an uncommon share of penetration, and, in many instances, extraordinary ingenuity: this is strikingly remarkable in the innumerable witticisms peculiar to their vernacular tongue, and which are more frequently heard in the cottages and amongst fishermen than in the highest circles: but this subject will be more fully illustrated hereafter.

The women of Sicily have always been celebrated for their fascinating *naïveté*, personal charms,

and marked partiality towards strangers. This lovely sex, formed at once to charm and humanize mankind, have, in this island, sunk far below that dignity in which they should always shine, caused by the force of example, want of proper attention to their education, and the degeneracy of those whose duty it is to sustain the honor of the female sex by the practice of virtue on their own part. I should be sorry, and unjust, were I to say a word calculated to wound the feelings of the women of Sicily, but, while it affords me the utmost satisfaction to bestow on them that meed of praise which they so justly merit, the impartiality of my views prompts me to draw their character in its true light. Many people pretend to assert, that it is to the influence of a warm climate, and the like causes, to which the levity of character or conduct, so conspicuous in the women of this island, ought to be attributed: this I am induced to deny in the most positive manner; and am perfectly satisfied, that it is alone to the general depravity of manners, and want of proper example, that we see so little sense of moral duty in the women of Sicily, for virtue is alike in all climates. The time is not, I trust, far distant, when, by a new era, they will once more regain that place in society by which domestic happiness and public virtue can alone be preserved in a state. There is scarcely any woman in the island who has not her confessor, with whom her secrets, wishes, or desires, and deviations from the paths of rectitude, are faith-

fully deposited. I regret to say, that those who fill the important office of confessors here are very different from that which they ought to be; and when the minister of Heaven can be so depraved as to promote the licentious wishes of his confessional, while he assumes the sacrilegious right of absolving her from sin, how is it possible to expect a change for the better? or any sense of moral obligation?

It is impossible to witness the extraordinary influence which the priesthood of Sicily have on the women, without entertaining a sentiment of the utmost dissatisfaction; as, instead of making them more virtuous, it would appear to me one of the causes which increase depravity.*

Little can be said in praise of the Sicilian costume, as it possesses neither grace nor beauty; the lower orders' dress, during the summer, consists of a pair of velvet small-clothes, coarse cotton stockings, white shirt, and cotton night-cap, called in Sicily the *bareta*, which is worn by nearly all ranks, and is thought one of the most effectual preventions against the effects of a damp atmosphere, so peculiar to many parts of the island: a

* "Cette grande règle de dominer autant que possible la sensibilité par rapport à la tentation, a été singulièrement violée dans l' Eglise Catholique. Imposer le célibat aux prêtres, en leur confiant les fonctions les plus délicates dans l'examen des consciences et la direction des familles, c'etoit les placer dans une situation violente, entre le malheur d'observer une loi inutile *ou l'opprobre de la violer.*"—*Traités de Leg.*, tom. iii., 6, 7.

species of sandal is worn on the feet; it is made from a piece of bullock's hide, and is laced on the leg half way up, this is a remote vestige of the ancient dress, although without its symmetry or convenience. The winter costume, in the country, is made of a coarse brown cloth, which, converted into a long jacket and small-clothes, keeps out the inclemency of that season. The cloak is worn in winter and summer, as by the peasantry of Spain, and is intended, as one should imagine, to keep out both the heat and cold! Amongst the lower orders of women, camblet, and coarse English cotton, are generally worn; and the head, though sometimes covered with a white linen cap, is, when they walk, ornamented with a long white shawl, which reaches to the ground, and bears an exact resemblance to the *mantilla* of Spain; they usually wear a profusion of hair.

The middling classes of society dress like those of all the other civilized countries of Europe, except the women, whose costume, consisting of black silk and a hood of the same texture, gives them a very interesting appearance: this habiliment appears to partake both of the Spanish and Mahometan dress.

The dress of the nobility and gentry is the same as that of England and France, and subject to the same versatility of fashionable caprice.

People of every rank in Sicily are particularly fond of public entertainments, and music was never so universally cultivated as in this island,

Their plays and operas are unfortunately very badly sustained, owing to the difficulty of procuring good performers, of which there are not ten natives of the whole island.* It is a matter of

* Those who have attracted the greatest share of public applause in the capital amongst the opera performers are Mesdames Bossani, who formerly had an engagement in London, Caldara, and La Scrazzi, all natives of Italy; the first, though rather ancient, possesses a very fascinating appearance on the boards, and from her science and uncommon sweetness of tone, is much calculated to please in a small theatre. The second, by no means in her zenith, and less gifted with science, has for many years sustained her character as a *Prima Buffa*, in this country. Her personal charms have not been ineffectual either, and amongst a number of admirers, she boasts of a British officer of the first rank, and who has since been destined to occupy a most distinguished place in the estimation of his country. La Scrazzi is a lady well known in Malta and Sicily; her voice, though of the second order, possesses a shrill and plaintive sweetness, extremely pleasing in tender subjects. Amongst the males I am sorry to observe, that there is not a single performer worth hearing, either in Sicily or Malta. The operas of Cimarosa, Mozart, Paissiello, and Gulielmo are chiefly played.

In speaking of the comedians, it is pleasing to record, that this branch of the theatrical art, is much more ably filled than the former. There are a number of very respectable performers of both sexes; amongst the rest, I cannot help noticing a native of Sicily, named La Panio, who is, without exception, one of the most entertaining personages I ever saw on any stage. This extraordinary character enjoys a reputation in Palermo and Messina, which far exceeds that of our most celebrated comic performers on the London theatres. He is generally engaged in the capital, and always announced in his own name, which never fails to attract a crowded house; his part is delivered in

surprize to strangers, that there should be so few sources of amusement in this island, for, independent of the theatre, gambling table, the promenade, and an occasional ball, a person who visits Sicily is totally at a loss how to find out recreative pastimes. Hunting and horse racing are entirely unknown; the introduction of both would be highly profitable, as serving to improve the breed of horses so much degenerated, as well as to rouze the nobility from their present inactive life. It ought, however, to be observed to the credit of Sicily, that the manners of its inhabitants are not disgraced by the practice of pugilism, cock fighting, or bull baiting, all of which elegant

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the Sicilian dialect. The countenance of this man is sufficient to inspire humour, but such is his inexhaustible fund of natural wit, and all that repartee of which the language of the Sicilian peasantry is so susceptible, that he keeps the audience in one continued roar of laughter while on the stage; his happy method of lashing the weaknesses and vices of his countrymen is not the least of La Panio's merits.

The ballet is much liked here, and since the engagement of the Campili family, great satisfaction has been given in that department of scenic representation.

The decorum observed at the Sicilian theatres cannot fail to excite the surprize and admiration of those who have observed the vociferating brawlings of an audience in other parts of the world. The system of only lighting up the stage, and leaving the rest of the house in darkness, is not quite so agreeable to English taste; nor is the custom universally practised by the nobility of eating their macaroni in the boxes during the continuance of the play or opera, much more likely to find many admirers in England.

sports are reserved for more *enlightened countries.*

It is now time to give you some idea of the state of manners and society in the capital of his Sicilian Majesty; this, though imperfect, claims the merit of being strictly true, and may be considered as calculated to depict the general character of the whole nation. It will be in the following statement, drawn from personal observation, that the evils of a defective system of public education will be seen, and the vital importance of a good one fully demonstrated. To begin with the mode of educating and bringing up the sons of the barons, who are destined to fill the principal offices of the state, these are kept at home, in general, until the age of ten, during which time an *ajo* or tutor, always selected from the priesthood, is appointed to superintend their early studies, which consist in the rudiments of grammar, and the Latin tongue. The weak partiality of mothers is, however, such in Sicily, that if the tutor finds it necessary to chastise his pupil, or prompts him to close application, he is sure to excite the resentment of the *Padrona*, as they are styled here. This is generally followed by his dismissal, and I have known the *ajo* to be changed five or six times until one was procured who knew how to humour the weakness and inattention of his pupils. Independent of the little which a boy can learn under such circumstances, it will be seen hereafter that the example of his

parents is not always such as to create a hope of his future virtue or talents. Arrived at the age of ten, the young student is sent to the *semenaria*, or university, where he undergoes the usual process of studying the Latin language, and reading the fathers of the church, lives of the saints, &c., to the total exclusion of elegant or useful literature, and modern languages; at eighteen he launches into all the follies of fashionable life, enters the world, and becomes a warm participator in the dissolute pursuits of his countrymen. The first object of a young nobleman thus let loose upon the world, is a close and unceasing attendance at some gambling society, which are found in the greatest abundance both in Palermo and Messina; he next becomes a dealer in horses, and the climax consists in some intrigue which in our country would destroy the peace and happiness of a whole family.

The system of female education is no less defective and extraordinary than that of the other sex, and although I alluded to it in a former letter, I beg leave to add a few more observations in this. All the daughters of people in decent circumstances, together with those of the higher circles, are placed in a *retiro*, a house for female education, at the age of six years, where, as already stated, they are taught to read and write. The time which they are made to devote to these pursuits is, however, altogether insufficient to the purpose of improvement in either of them,

and I could at this moment name several princesses in Sicily who cannot even write their own names! In fact, it is extremely rare for a Sicilian lady to write, and those who know the state of manners in the island infinitely better than myself, have informed me, that the chief, if not only object of the girls learning this accomplishment, is that of being enabled to conduct their intrigues with more satisfaction and secresy. However singular this assertion may appear to your feelings, it is offered as a positive fact. With the exception of the little time devoted to useful study, the young people in their *retiros* are filled with notions of the most extravagant bigotry, and every effort is made to persuade them to embrace a monastic life, in which the confessors and abbesses but too often succeed. When their parents intend them for the more rational state of matrimony, a husband is generally selected from the family of some relation or friend, and hundreds are led from a convent to the altar, and enter in a moment into all the functions of domestic affairs, without having ever had the smallest opportunity of knowing any thing about the management of a house or family. The disorders and inconvenience which attend such a system are incredible. Mutual disgust soon follows between both parties, and in conformity to the custom of the country, the husband and wife select favorites, with whom their future time is to be past; and the offspring of their marriage

thus brought up to witness the contamination and dishonour of their parents.

The above remarks may serve to convey some idea of education in Sicily, but the further illustration of it in pursuing the melancholy dissoluteness of manners which pervades almost every rank of society in the island, is too important not to be particularly noticed, as it can only be by a fair and candid exposition of truth, however invidious the task of bringing it into light may be, that we can ever hope to improve the condition of human nature.

The extraordinary indifference and even sang-froid with which the most gross deviations from virtue and other irregularities are treated between man and wife, and, indeed, all the members of the same family, cannot be too deeply deplored, or severely reprehended. There is scarcely a man of any rank in the island who is not thoroughly acquainted with his wife's infidelity and misconduct: and this without taking any notice whatever of her proceedings; although they deprive him of all which, in an honest mind, renders man fit to live in society. His only means of resenting the most flagrant attack upon his honour, is that of retaliating by a similar line of conduct.

The degree of abandonment and infamy to which the lower orders have arrived, with respect to procuring the means of living, is shocking to humanity, and repugnant to the most degraded character. It is, however, truly astonishing, but

not less worthy of every good man's detestation, that our own countrymen have, on several occasions, been known to encourage the practice which I am about to disclose, as forming a prominent feature in the Sicilian character. It frequently happens that a mother or father set a price upon their daughters, and regularly dispose of them to the best bidder; I have known many instances of this kind happen in Sicily, and I am sorry to record, that an officer of rank filling one of the highest situations under his Majesty in the Mediterranean, was once well known to have bought a young girl, eleven years old, for one hundred dollars! and having kept her some days let her go about her business.

Brothers tacitly wink at the bad behaviour of their sisters, who, prompted by example and education, cannot be supposed to avoid the general destruction of moral principles. The law never interferes, and if in Sicily a man was sufficiently virtuous or resolute to institute a criminal process against the disturber of his domestic happiness, he would be thought the most egregious blockhead on earth, such things being never heard of.

From the perusal of the foregoing you will have no doubt imagined, that the *point d' honneur* is neither understood nor much practised in Sicily; consequently, duelling, although tolerated by the feudal laws, is rarely heard of; insults are daily given and received with impunity, after which a man would be ashamed to live in England! Upon

a practice handed down to us by the weakness of our ancestors, it is extremely hazardous to give any opinion; nothing is half so difficult as the eradication of old customs, however repugnant to reason and common sense, a difficulty which will, I apprehend, perpetuate duelling amongst us for some time to come, particularly while the legislature is indifferent to the various other means within its reach of satisfying a man's wounded honour, without seeking for a justification of his character in the violation of the most sacred commands of Almighty God, "*Thou shalt do no murder!*"

While it is hoped that the foregoing painful exposition of Sicilian manners and customs will excite that degree of shame which may, in some small degree, hasten the return of a whole people to virtue, it cannot be denied, but that there are many honorable exceptions, amongst the women, to the remarks which I have offered in a general sense. I should be truly sorry to wound the feelings of those who have become connected in the ties of matrimony with our own countrymen; but their numbers are so small, and mode of life so secluded, that their virtuous example seldom can extend beyond the circle of their own families.

Amongst the nobles, night is converted into day; their time is regulated in the following manner: about ten in the morning, chocolate is brought to the Sicilian votary of fashion in bed, after which he falls asleep till twelve, when

he rises, and either visits the promenade, takes a ride, or lounges to the *Caffe de' Nobile*, noblemen's coffee-house;* at three he sits down to his macaroni, and immediately after dinner returns to his bed, where he continues till six, when rising, he again visits the promenade, and forms the necessary assignation with his mistress; then bounds to the opera, or some private *conversazione*. A suite of rooms are attached to the Carolina, for the reception of those who wish to play Faro: these are invariably preferred to the opera, and always crowded at an early hour, when about one hundred people, men and women, sit down round a large table, and continue playing until two in the morning, when they return to supper, and keep it up till after four; ladies of the first rank only attend the Carolina conversazione, and numbers, both young and old, are seen at it nightly. There is no person in Sicily

* The *Caffe de' Nobile* is, I believe, only peculiar to Sicily, there being one in all the considerable towns. They are established for the sole use of the nobility, and are in general supplied with a faro and a billiard table. It may well be supposed, that in a place like this where the life of any person who can command a little money, is always devoted to the most sluggish indolence, these receptacles are in general very well attended: that of Palermo is said to be an entertaining scene of politics, play, and town scandal; they, however, say, that many of them who frequent it are not the most celebrated for their talents or wisdom; this gave rise to an odd conceit some time ago, when a wag wrote over the door in large letters, "NOAH'S ARK!"

who does not gamble, for it is one of those customs which the most reserved and prudent character never thinks of avoiding; so general has this ruinous disposition become all over the island. At Messina there is a prince whose palace is literally converted into a gambling house, and open every night in the year, Sundays not excepted, for the reception of his countrymen, and British officers, many of whom have been ruined by their perseverance in, and attachment to, play in that town.

The general treatment of servants in Sicily, particularly those in the higher circles, is another proof of how much want of principle there is amongst them. These unfortunate people are kept up night and day, and are only allowed about one shilling per diem; they are, moreover, very seldom paid, and innumerable instances of ill treatment towards them are in circulation at Palermo.

Prince G——i, who keeps a large suite of domestics, used to have a false key to his magazine, where the harness was kept; he went there often during the night, and took something out equal to the wages which might be due to his coachman, who was obliged to make good losses of that sort, and in a few days after found some excuse to justify him in discharging the servant, who, on applying for his wages, was driven away without a farthing, and threatened to be put into jail, which has often been the case with servants

in the above way. The prince's nocturnal visits were, however, one night interrupted, in a manner which prevented their recurrence; one of the coachmen was induced to entertain some suspicion of his master, from the extreme frequency of these thefts; and, determined to find out the perpetrator, he hid himself in a corner of the stable, armed with a bludgeon; his suspicions were shortly realized by the prince's appearance, who soon completed the object of his visits, and was boldly carrying some article away with him, when the servant, without further hesitation, struck him on the head and brought him to the ground; an alarm was made, and in a moment all the servants were brought to the place, where they beheld their master prostrate and full of confusion: the prince on recovering himself rose, enjoined profound secresy, and putting ten ounzes into each of their hands, returned to his bed-room. This circumstance was communicated to me by an eye witness.*

The Count of C——a is known to have had recourse to a similar practice, and once very narrowly escaped being murdered.

Many servants remain for four or six months employed without receiving a farthing of their

* This is an old Neapolitan trick, and is well known to have been practised some years ago in Naples by the Principe Spinosa, then a captain in the king's guards. The result of his predatory expeditions to the stables, it should be observed, was not unlike that of his successor, the hero of our anecdote.

wages; during this time they are obliged to find themselves in every thing, and after having pawned or sold their little valuables, cloaths, &c., for personal support, they naturally ask for payment. I have known several upon such occasions kicked out of doors, and afterwards imprisoned as calumniators, if they attempted to have recourse to the law, which on that occasion is vested in the captain of justice, often more vile and unprincipled than those complained against. The relation of little circumstances like these may appear puerile, but it is by comparing "great things to small," that we can alone hope thoroughly to know a people—it is upon this account I trouble you with them.

The power of the barons over their vassals is incredible, and exerted to a degree which must ever be fatal to every thing in the shape of civil liberty and happiness. This is strongly exemplified by the manner in which the lower classes of country people are pressed for their rents; if, for instance, a poor man owes five pounds, a distress is immediately executed, however favorable an accommodation he may propose, and all his effects being sold, they frequently amount to more than his arrears; in this case he seldom if ever has a sixpence restored to him, and hundreds of families have been thus driven to a life of mendicity.

In all matters of imposition or injury done to the poor vassals in the baronial towns, they usu-

ally apply to the local governor for redress. The governor's mouth is easily stopt by a bribe; the poor man is then obliged to go to the capital and apply to the baron, and is usually kept ten days without a hearing; during this time his little pittance, brought up for the support of his journey, is exhausted between servants and the *Locanda;* and as most frequently occurs, the person against whom he complains, arrives or writes to the baron; of whom he is perhaps a creature; in this case the man is accused of being an impostor, and obliged to return to his home, injured both in his purse and feelings.*

It would be an endless task were I to detail the particular circumstances of individual depravity that have occurred since my having been in the habit of frequenting this island. The conduct of those in the higher walks of life in never paying their debts without years of solicitation on the part of their creditors, who have no compulsory

* The many evils occasioned not only to the people, but the parties themselves, by never visiting their estates, are of the most serious description of any felt in Sicily. When a nobleman leaves Palermo to enjoy what they call *La Villagetura*, the utmost extent of his journey is not above ten or twelve miles, and this is even considered a great wonder here. Hence that total abandonment of agricultural pursuits, and those enormous excesses committed daily on the unfortunate vassals who are left in the hands of three or four petty tyrants, that only think of impoverishing them, and annihilating every spirit of industry.

resource in the law; the shameless indifference with which adultery is tolerated; and, in fact, all other vices, the result of bad government, are too numerous to be detailed in the compass of an ordinary communication. There are, besides, several facts connected with the manners and customs of this island, of such a depraved nature, and which would be applicable to both sexes, laity and clergy, that I should be ashamed and highly blameable, if I attempted to lay them before a virtuous or feeling mind. A recent instance is, however, of too curious and characteristic a nature to be omitted, and will conclude this particular part of my letter, on manners and customs.

Prince B——o, a young man of fortune, and versed in all the fashionable vices of his country, became enamoured with Madame Campili, the first dancer; but that lady piqueing herself upon a degree of virtue, by no means peculiar to persons in that line, was not to be so easily conquered. Determined, however, to leave no effort untried for the accomplishment of his wishes, he was struck with one which appeared admirably calculated to insure success in a place like this. Madame Campili's brother, a fine young man, and first *ballerino* in the same theatre, was invited by the Prince to his house, and introduced to the Princess, who received him very kindly, and afterwards honoured the young son of Thalia with the most flattering marks of confidence and

favour; and their intercourse was overlooked by Prince B——o, on condition that young Campili should interest himself with the sister in his behalf. It is said that the young man tacitly consented to this base proposition, although without any intention of putting it into execution; be this as it may, Prince B——o did not succeed, and stung with rage, only thought how he could be revenged on the dancer, whom he accused of having deceived him, and interdicted him from ever entering his house again. It is but too true, however, that "love laughs at locksmiths," and notwithstanding all the prince's precautions, he found it impossible to interrupt the intimacy of his wife and the *ballerino*, upon which, in order to conclude a conduct commenced in so dishonorable a manner, he complained to the court of Mr. Campili's improper intercourse with the Princess, and accordingly the dancer was ordered to quit the capital within twenty-four hours. The person who communicated this fact, worthy of the most degraded times, is an intimate and confidential friend of Campili, and added, that for several months people were hired to assassinate his friend. The above circumstance instead of exciting any sensation of disgust, or that degree of horror which it so justly merited, is talked of in the fashionable circles as a mere joke!

To such a length has this practice arrived in Sicily, that two princes, P——a and N——i, were well

known, some years ago, to have made a contract with each other, that the charms of their princesses should be equally accessible to both!

In treating of the manners and customs which show how far the people of this island are removed from moral and religious virtue, it affords me heartfelt pleasure when it is in my power to make any exception to so general a rule, and this I am called upon to do in reflecting on the character which distinguishes the people of rank in Catania,* who in almost every thing appear to be a distinct race from the other inhabitants of the island. That a very large share of the common defects, and general dissoluteness, may be attributed to those I will not deny, but it bears no proportion whatever to what is practised in other places. A marked degree of attention towards the education and conduct of the female sex, unknown in any other part of Sicily, is self-evident in that city, and accounts to strangers for the numerous accomplishments and decorous behaviour they see in the young ladies there, where a much greater sense of virtue and its attendant, true politeness, exists, than could possibly be expected in a country so vitiated as Sicily.

It is scarcely necessary to say, that in an island

* While at this beautiful city I was astonished to observe, that mothers would not allow their daughters to dance the waltz, so prevalent in all the other parts of Sicily.

governed in the way this is, a more extensive system of female prostitution must prevail, than in others where the laws, public industry, and moral obligation, contribute more effectually to check an evil so injurious to population and the best interests of civilized society, when not influenced by these necessary barriers. Such is, unhappily, the case all over Sicily, where that unfortunate sex become abandoned from necessity, example, and want of those means which might enable them to obtain an honest livelihood. This can alone account for the great number of wretched females who are found in most of the large towns,* exhibiting for the most part the greatest emblems of poverty and distress. It would be altogether preposterous in the present state of morals and legislation prevalent in the island, were I to assert that the number of unfortunate females could be diminished, and in common with others, can only deplore it. I ought, however, to observe, that much may be done towards the amelioration of their forlorn and melancholy lot; and it will not, I hope, be denied, that when, either through want of employment, or any of the other causes incident to a

* A governor of Messina, named G——i, was about two years ago known to have levied a tax of an ounce per month, twelve shillings and sixpence, upon each woman of the town. The authority for this extraordinary mode of taxation is supposed to have been derived from a very high quarter.

state, which oblige the female sex to find the means of existence in the pursuit of a life that entails so much misery and dishonour, their fate ought not to be unworthy of the utmost solicitude which a government could bestow, to soften the rigors of their unfortunate situation, created in a great measure by the inefficiency or weakness of that very government. I disagree totally with those crude moralists who think that by persecution, and a desire to hold up these ill-fated victims to public scorn, the evils of prostitution are diminished. Such a conduct pursued with so much irascibility in some countries of Europe, is worthy of the utmost reprehension, and has been found to increase the progression of vice by hardening its votaries to a species of opposition in which human nature often delights, even in the prosecution of crimes.*

* Plus cet état sera l' objet naturel du mépris, moins il est necessaire d' y ajouter la flétrissure des lois, il emporte avec lui sa peine naturelle: peine qui est déjà trop grave quand on considère tout ce qui devroit disposer à la commisération en faveur de cette classe infortunée, victime de l' inegalité sociale, et toujours surpris du desespoir. Combien peu de ces femmes ont embrassé cet état par choix et avec connoisance de cause? Combien peu y persévéroient si elles pouvoient le quiter, si elles pouvoient sortir de ce cercle d' ignominie et de malheur, si elles n' etoient repoussées de toutes les carrieres qu' elles pourroient tenter de s'ouvrir! Combien y ont été precipitées par une erreur d'un moment, par l' inexperience de l'âme, *par la corruption de leurs parens*, par le crime d' un séducteur, *par une severité inexorable*, par une premiere faute, *presque toute par l' abandon et par la misère*. Si l' opinion est injuste

This subject has been often considered, but is of so much importance, that I will even hazard another remark or two connected with it. In some countries of the continent, particularly France, it has long been an object of legislative solicitude to regulate the conduct of unfortunate females, by making their superintendance a part of general police. This admirable custom, which, to the prejudiced and superficial observer, may have the appearance of promoting vice, has been found to produce a directly contrary effect, by exciting a greater degree of shame; and while their situation has experienced the greatest amelioration, the progress of a loathsome disease has been almost annihilated. I cannot help adding, that this subject ought, in my humble opinion, to occupy the most serious consideration of our own government; and when we reflect, that from the remotest periods of antiquity, prostitution has been amongst the inevitable evils of every state, however civilized, it must be allowed, that it is high time to take more effectual measures for the diminution of those evils which it brings on the community. Our laws and men of science have prescribed all kinds of necessary precaution against the progress of fevers, plague, and other contagions; how much more does it behove them

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et tyrannique, *le législateur doit il exaspérer cette injustice*, doit-il servir d' instrument à cette tyrannie?—*Traités de Leg.*, tom. iii., p. 55.

to check one which is still more fatal in its effects upon individuals.

It has ever been the study of renowned legislators to provide for the happiness of all those who compose the civil and political body of a state; why then should a sex, more often obliged from want and poverty to pursue a life of irregularity, than their natural inclination to err, be abandoned to the world, and deprived of those legal precautions, or of that solicitude for their reformation and health, which it is peculiarly the duty of every government to establish? Aware of the motives which are attributed to any person who enters upon a subject of this nature, I am prepared to hear the worst; but treating of the causes which operate so powerfully against the public happiness of so many thousands in this island, I have felt myself imperiously called upon to suggest what I consider as the only means of preventing many of the melancholy effects of female prostitution. The interests of humanity are, I presume, paramount to every other consideration; and the most strenuous opposer of any suggestion in favour of women of the town cannot deny, but that incalculable benefits might result from preventing the dissemination of a disease, which has created so many miseries in this island, and even affected its general population.

A celebrated author has justly observed, that it is not the want of inclination so much as that of the means, which prevent people from marrying.

This remark is, however, less applicable to Sicily than any other part of the world I have yet been in: there are very few bachelors to be met with, either amongst the higher or lower classes of the community. If a young woman is not married at a very early age, it is more than probable she becomes a victim to seduction. It would, however, be much better for the peace of individuals, if they did not consider matrimony as so necessary a duty here; it is only a signal for a life of abandonment, and mutual profligacy between the husband and wife; there are, however, some regulations connected with marriage ceremonies in Sicily, which contain usefulness and simplicity in a very eminent degree, while they prevent innumerable disputes afterwards. In other countries of Europe, marriages are more usually brought about from motives of self-interest, than other reciprocal feelings of attachment, by which that state can alone be rendered happy. But the legislators of Sicily very wisely considered, that too much could not be done, in order to secure the mutual interests of those destined to become man and wife; it is therefore a rule, previous to any determination about the marriage of two persons, that their friends and relatives should meet, and consult upon the matter. When each party agrees to the match, the gentleman's friends enter into an explanation of his pecuniary resources, and in their turn are informed what the lady can bring with her to keep up the dignity of their future family. In the higher

and middling classes of society this generally consists of a large quantity of wearing apparel, jewellery, sometimes a sum of money, and almost invariably a daily stipend, arising out of the estates of the family. This is an excellent practice, and secures the Sicilian ladies from a thousand inconveniences to which women of other countries are exposed: it is called "*La Dota,*" and attached to the daughters of barons of every class. The foregoing matters being arranged to the parties' satisfaction, a day is appointed to consign over the lady's fortune; this is called by the Sicilians "*Il Giorno dei Capitali Matrimoniali,*" and is an important ceremony in this island. The bridegroom, attended by his friends, proceeds to the bride's, accompanied by a public notary, when a long string of articles are drawn out, expressive of his determination to receive her in marriage, and be the future guardian of her happiness. The final day is then appointed, when the parties are united. I ought to observe, that it is the day before marriage on which the *dota* is consigned.

Amongst the lower classes there is a custom nearly similar, except that of the permanent fortune; and in celebrating their wedding-day, which is devoted to a much greater degree of festivity than in high life, there is a curious practice in some parts of the island, said to be of very remote antiquity; it consists in throwing the wearing apparel and ornaments of the bride and bridegroom

on the floor, and their both joining in a national dance round their mutual property.

The laws of Sicily also enact, that in the event of the wife's death occurring before a twelvemonth has expired, from the date of her marriage, the whole of her fortune is restored to the family.

I need scarcely add, that there is no *Gretna Green* in this island.

In giving you an account of Sicilian manners, it will not, perhaps, be very foreign to my subject, and I hope not unacceptable, if I glance lightly on the state of English society in the island. I regret that little can be said in favour of our mode of living in any of the colonies to which our political connections lead us to settle. An insuperable spirit of party is generally brought from the mother country, and soon degenerates into scandal, calumny, and envy, its usual offspring.

I had occasion to notice this circumstance when describing Messina, but at Palermo there is infinitely less sociability; and, unfortunately, those who possess that scarce virtue called hospitality have not the means of seeing much company. A stranger would, however, feel no regret at this circumstance, perfectly a trifle when compared to the others which he daily witnesses; and who, possessing a sense of virtue, or any attachment to his countrymen, can patiently see them enter into all the errors of a people vitiated by the force of example, and the corruptions of government, as the Sicilians

are? He is equally induced to regret, that in their intercourse with each other, there is a want of that liberality and mutual confidence, which should invariably distinguish the individuals of a great nation. I am ready to confess, that there are mercantile men in Palermo whose origin or present opulence, is not such as entitles them to a seat at the embassador's table. They are, however, in general, highly respectable, and may possess talents which would do honour to a more exalted situation; they should, therefore, be encouraged: and, to carry the argument still further, from whence does the great source of our national wealth flow? If the stream of commerce is turned aside, or checked, let us hope that it will flow again; and at all events, the unfortunate merchants are not to blame.

In concluding this part of the subject, I cannot help animadverting on an insatiable spirit of monopoly, evident in one or two persons whom I had an opportunity of observing, both in Messina and the capital. It is no excuse whatever for these gentlemen to say, that men of capital must command the patronage of government; for while I admit the truth of this reply, I cannot be induced to change my opinion as to the moral part of my own observation, and its general effects on the interests of society and commerce.

As you may well suppose, the morals of our lovely countrywomen, who come here are not much improved. The levity which nature has but too

frequently implanted in the female mind is always a just source of regret; but when an English woman is exposed to the example of Sicilian manners and customs, the consequences are such as to increase your dissatisfaction, and still more often to make you lament that she had ever left her own country, to seek unhappiness and disappointment on the polluted shores of another.

I have already stated, that it is not the object of these letters to expose the topics of fashionable scandal, for which a wide field is open to more inquisitive travellers.

This afflicting picture of manners might be extended to a variety of other particulars, calculated to show the necessity of reform in the administration of justice, and practice of morality, in Sicily; but as the object of my letters is not that of calumniating a whole nation, I cannot wantonly enter into all the instances of depravity which have come within my observation, lest either my countrymen or the Sicilians should be induced to imagine that I was disposed to paint them in colours which they did not deserve. Deeply interested for the future happiness of an ill-fated and oppressed people, I was determined not to omit any thing which appeared calculated to lay their real situation before a government and nation whose interests are so closely blended with theirs, that it becomes their duty to secure and guarantee the island's future rights against foreign and domestic enemies.

Having endeavoured to fulfil one part of this letter, I am happy to add, that in contemplating the general character of this people, there are, in all classes of the community, persons who, with the strongest inclination to improve and reform the state of their government and manners, even the most dissolute, have assured me that they are merely prompted to act as they do by the example of the great, and shameful relaxation of the laws. In fact, there is something so fascinating in virtue, that we usually find those who are the last to obey its dictates, inclined to sigh after it, and acknowledge that it is by a combination of religion and morality, that true happiness can alone be attained in this world.

It has often been necessary for me to touch on the subject of education; its importance will probably be a sufficient apology for the some additional observations in which I propose shortly to state some further defects that have appeared to me connected with the mode of bringing up young people in this island;* and in concluding an account of manners and customs with the imperfections of

* There are scarcely any private schools in the interior of the island. I have passed through several large towns, where people have seemed quite surprized when I inquired whether there was a place for the education of youth in them. At Licodia, in Val de Noto, which about twenty years ago was a very flourishing town, one of the inhabitants assured me that the greater part of its population do not even know that there is such a thing as a knowledge of letters in existence!

public education, I believe it will not be departing too much from the object in view, as one naturally arises out of the other.

There is, I believe, scarcely any country in Europe that has, in modern times, duly appreciated the vital importance of a regular system of public education. France has, in this respect, shewn a great example to other powers, in the establishment of her central schools, which, if followed up, must be productive of the most beneficial effects in future times. With respect to the British government, its policy in this particular is highly defective; and I venture to assert, that our popularity abroad is not only amazingly retarded, but very often altogether prevented, from the want of a system of education which might tend to produce an assimilation of manners, while it would always prove to the people that we had their interests at heart.

As I have already noticed the principal seminaries, little more remains to be said on that head, except that the new established ones, called *I Scuoli Normali*, claim a decided preference over the most celebrated colleges of the island. They were established by a learned and amiable divine, the Padre di Còsmi, in the year 1789, and are not unlike our free-schools in England. The number of boys are limited, and those who have the direction of them are under the necessity of undergoing a most strict examination, both as to their characters, morals, and talents for teaching.

With regard to education in its general acceptation of the word, I have been always led to consider it in two distinct points of view, that of physical and moral, both of equal importance to the parent, as well as collective body of a nation. A reference to the institutions of Lycurgus and Minos will show what a degree of importance both those legislators attached to the first of these principles. How well their trouble was repaid, the glory to which Candia and Sparta soon arose is an ample proof.*

If, in the present vitiated state of manners, any native was inclined to adopt a different mode of educating children, they would doubtless recollect, that rigid obedience to the laws, contempt of danger, and abstemious mode of living, which made the above powers at once the envy and admiration of surrounding states. This cannot, however, be expected by those who are accustomed to witness

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* What sentiments of admiration and envy does it not excite, when we read of the Lacedæmonians and Athenians, great as they were themselves, sending to Sparta for a general to command their armies!

The school of Lycurgus was no less remarkable for the uncommon pains taken in the education of youth; and when a modern calls to mind the practice of lulling the young people of both sexes to rest with soft music, he can hardly believe himself an inhabitant of the same hemisphere.

This will doubtless call to mind the story of a school-boy, who, sooner than be detected in a theft, suffered the wolf to penetrate his entrails. A finer example of the effects of a great education could not possibly be cited.

the slow and dilatory progress of improvement; and whatever result the inquiry produces, it is merely the author's consideration to expose facts such as they have appeared to him in the course of his researches. All those exercises known under the head of Gymnasia are completely disregarded in Sicily; and it is owing to the existing manner of swathing infants that they, in general, have more the appearance of corpses than living creatures. To exemplify this observation, when a child is born, it is immediately bound up with several bandages, which cover the feet and ascend to the neck, destroying circulation, and giving to the poor creature the appearance of an Egyptian mummy: it is left in this way for twelve and twenty-four hours. The cold bath is also another practice, so highly necessary in a relaxing climate like that of Sicily, never used. In the higher circles, children are invariably sent out to nurse, by which the intention of nature is completely frustrated, and the infant is treated as those of the lower orders.

The foregoing facts account fully to those who visit the island, for that surprize which they feel at the frightful appearance of nearly all the children under five and six years of age: after that period, there is no exercise, such as those practised in England, for bracing the nerves, and inuring them to fatigue; consequently habits of unconquerable indolence grow up with the youth of Sicily, and make them altogether unfit for any useful or labo-

rious calling; thousands, therefore, become wanderers, and a nuisance to society, instead of embracing some mode of life calculated to keep them profitably employed. The exact veracity of this remark will not, I am sure, be disputed by any person who has remained in the island for ever so short a period.

This grand defect in the physical education of youth is productive of that inclination to gamble so conspicuous in all ranks of society, and entails ruin on thousands of families, without mentioning its effect on the best interests of a nation; so that in any future attempt to regenerate the island, this subject will doubtless excite its due share of attention, and is, in my opinion, of the highest importance to a state. With respect to moral education, I now proceed to make a few observations upon the defects, connected with that part of Sicilian manners.

It is truly singular that so great a variety of opinions should yet exist as to the best means of training up the youthful mind, and communicating instruction. I am however inclined to believe, that this difference of opinion is chiefly peculiar to pedagogues and people of confined understanding; for I cannot suppose that the philosopher, or man of virtue, can possibly think it necessary to inflict continued bodily punishment, and inspire fear, in order to enlarge the minds of children. Here again the education of Sparta excites fresh admiration; and the sense of shame

excited in the youth of that nation, is known to have contributed more to rendering the mind great and virtuous, than all the flagellation of a modern pedant, which,. in almost every instance, has the effect either of breaking a rising spirit, and weakening the frame, or, what is still worse, checking that energy of the soul, which an incitement to emulation can alone bring into maturity.

I have collected, both from observation and unquestionable authority, that the ill-timed severity and frequent corporal punishment exercised in the larger seminaries of public education in this island, are sources of the greatest injury to pupils, and particularly require immediate correction. How far the government of a country could, with strict propriety, enter into a subject of this sort, I do not consider myself competent to decide, except in repeating the opinion of Plato, and other writers of antiquity, who all concur in asserting that nothing is unworthy of an enlightened legislator's notice, which may be calculated to promote the happiness of society. Leaving this subject to your consideration, I proceed to notice the other defects complained of by the learned of Sicily, as impeding the progress of youth in their education. In order to give you a clear idea of this subject, I have been induced to class these under ten different heads.

1st. The immense time, sometimes seven years, which a lad is obliged to devote to the Latin tongue; whereas, by the justly celebrated method

of Dumarsais, as inculcated in his analytical grammar, adapted as that work is to the meanest capacity, the young idea is taught to expand, as well as embrace a greater variety of objects at the same time. It has, I confess, been adopted in the "*Scuoli Normali*," and with unparalleled success; but the mere force of prejudice has excluded it from the universities, where the more complex and tedious method of Alvarez continues to be used; this was, as I am informed, substituted by the Jesuits.

2nd. The preposterous plan of teaching the Latin from grammars altogether composed in that language, instead of the explanations being in the Italian tongue, which has long been established in the "*Scuoli Normali*."

3rd. The third relates to a fault which, I imagine, might with equal justice be applied to many other countries; it consists in the system of putting the classics into the hands of boys, with directions to make literal translations from them, without taking the smallest pains of inculcating either their spirit or meaning; the immediate effect of this plan is that of destroying a lad's taste for the elegant productions which he learns merely as a task, and which he is ever afterwards induced to recollect with the most perfect indifference; so that every object of literary pursuit and classical learning is baffled before a youth's mind is half formed.

4th. The almost universal neglect of Greek, so

properly said to be the key of European languages, and from whence we have derived such an infinity of technical terms, both in the arts and sciences.

5th. Not teaching the art of design more generally; an accomplishment, said by some to be the "logic of sight," and in the opinion of all, calculated to refine the ideas, and give such just notions of grace and proportion; without adverting to its utility in almost every walk of life.

6th. The adoption of an abstruse, and scholastic system of exploded metaphysics, for the more rational principles laid down by Locke, Bonnet, and Condillac; the former calculated to distract the most experienced mind, and the latter professedly intended for education, with the additional merit of being drawn from deep and profound personal observation, and not founded on the abstract theories of the old school.

7th. The manner of limiting the studies of all the students to the same pursuits, whatever their natural genius may lead to: thus, several years being devoted to Latin, logic commences; and, at length, after having labored through volumes of metaphysics, a young man is sent into the world without common sense. Would it not be much better if, instead of the above amalgamation of science, some general ideas were given of physics, as applicable to our views in life, and the simple doctrines of natural philosophy. The result of this defect in education I have often had occasion to observe; and it very frequently occurs, that

amongst the number of young men you meet with, the greater part of them can repeat whole strings of syllogisms, without being able to work the most simple sum in addition.

8th. In not paying more attention to arithmetic, which is shamefully neglected: the same may be said of geometry, the basis of thinking: algebra is scarcely known in the general system of education here; and nothing is more rare than meeting persons at all acquainted with the mathematical sciences.

9th. The not forming a distinct plan of instruction according to the profession either of law or medicine, for which each student may be destined by his parents. There is, it is well known, an infinite variety in the natural talents and inclinations of men; it is, I believe, equally true, that the studies of a person intended for the pulpit ought to be different from the candidate for medicine, and those of a lawyer from those of a soldier or statesman. The evils arising from a misapplication of studies, in this island, are serious and innumerable; and although it would be almost impossible entirely to prevent it, yet the matter is well worth the consideration of government.

10th. The last defect which I shall notice is, I presume, the most general and important, that of a total want of some general system of instruction for the lower orders of the community, who, in every state, form the mass of population, and its only true source of riches. The importance to a

wise government of taking this into its maturest consideration is too self-evident to require elucidation.

Although some liberal minded politicians of the present day are particularly fond of the poet's expression,

"Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise,"

yet, experience has proved, and benevolence dictated, that a prince cannot be more gloriously occupied than in disseminating useful knowledge through all classes of his subjects.

I should, therefore, feel most highly gratified, and strongly recommend it to the paternal care of his Sicilian Majesty, to think of the deplorable state of ignorance, and consequent superstition, in which the lower classes of his subjects continue;* and I need hardly add, that their future improvement can only tend to increase their attachment and secure his own popularity.

That admirable maxim of Cicero might also be referred to in reflecting on this interesting point, "I am persuaded," he says, "that the attention of those who govern ought to be that of rendering those under them happy, to the utmost of their power; and that this solicitude should not only

* La seule arme contre le monstre, c'est la raison; la seule manière d'empecher les hommes d'etre absurdes et méchans, c'est de les éclairer; pour rendre le fanatisme execrable, il ne faut que le piendre."—*Voltaire.*

be devoted to the citizens, but extended to the very slaves and allies, it being also the duty of a governor to tender the latter every assistance imaginable;" a maxim that cannot be too deeply engraven on the hearts of princes, and the exercise of which was never so loudly called for as in the present state of this island.

An infinity of subordinate facts, tending to illustrate Sicilian manners, might be added to the foregoing attempt to convey some idea of their general habits and mode of living, but as my object has been that of shewing that their vices are not so much the result of innate depravity, as the causes of an effect purely originating in their civil and political situation, I trust enough has been said to convince the reader of this important fact.

"National reflections," as a celebrated writer very justly observes, "are not justified in theory, nor upon any general principles; to know how well they are, and how justly they have been, applied, we must have the evidence of facts before us, we must be conversant with the sects in private life, and observe their principles of acting to us and to each other;" to this observation I have nothing to add, except that it has been deeply impressed on my mind, and the constant rule which I have followed, whether in speaking of the Sicilian or any other nation; and as every line of these observations has been written on the spot, they will, I trust, have the effect of making the

people of Sicily more intimately known to those of Great Britain; and, above all, tend to prove, that, to secure the affections of such a nation, we must first prove to them, that we are really interested for their future happiness; which can never be attained without a virtuous determination on the part of our government, seconded by the united population of Sicily, to establish that species of religious, civil, and political liberty, without which a state can never hope to become either great or prosperous.

From this subject I propose drawing your attention to another of very considerable importance, and which is, I believe, very little understood or appreciated in England. I allude to the state of Sicilian literature and learned men, both of which have experienced the fatal effects of oppression and neglect; but they are, I trust, destined to be regenerated ere long as the surest means of promoting universal civilization throughout the island.

LETTER XI.

Good laws are essential to good government, arts and sciences to the prosperity of a nation, and learning and politeness to the perfection of the human understanding.—*Mod. Hist. of Europe.*

Literature and Learned Men—Ancient Poetry—Writers of Antiquity—Restoration of Learning—Improvement of the Language—Succeeding Writers—Modern Poets—Law Professors—Painting—Music—Criticism—Censorship of Literature, and of the Press.

Sicily, 1811.

In tracing the national character of the Sicilians, I have not mentioned that excessive egotism, which the generality of modern travellers have very justly attributed to them; to know how far we are warranted in looking over this failing, candour obliges us to ascertain the source from whence it springs; and in a slight examination of those literary and scientific luminaries who have adorned the annals of this island, from the earliest periods of its history, the most scrupulous moralist cannot deny, that however much they may have fallen from that envied pre-eminence which they held amongst the most civilized powers of antiquity,

the literati of Sicily have a never-failing cause of exultation in the number and almost unexampled genius of their predecessors; indeed, it appears to me, that there is nothing more natural to human nature than a desire of being thought superior in mental qualification; and we find, that whenever people can boast of great ancestors, they are but too apt to consider the merits of their forefathers as a sufficient apology for their own ignorance and imbecility. Although this observation is, in a great measure, applicable to the modern Italians, and consequently to their contemporaries in Sicily, it is gratifying to reflect, that, on reviewing the civil and political disadvantages that have so closely attended the natives since the decline of the Roman Empire, their talents have, in every age, rose superior to the utmost efforts of despotism; and that, notwithstanding the numberless tyrants who have governed this island, from the days of Phalaris to this moment, the people have, in general, kept pace with, and, in many instances, far exceeded, the acquirements of their more favored neighbours.

Disregarding the vanity or fanaticism of several writers who would fain make you believe that the nephews of Noah were the first who communicated a knowledge of letters and the fine arts, to the people of Sicily, it is by no means difficult to suppose that the Phœnicians must have been the early disseminators of that civilization which it was

reserved for the Grecian colonies to bring into maturity in after times. This is, at least, the most natural conjecture, and the one adopted by the learned translator of Bourigny,* to whose meritorious labours I am particularly indebted for the greatest part of my historical references. A cursory review of his very able disquisition upon Sicilian literature, both ancient and modern, together with some hints derived from living characters, will, I trust, be found sufficient to fulfil the object of my present communication, that of doing justice to a most enlightened community, and endeavouring to prove that Cicero did not overrate the character of the people whose cause he so gloriously espoused against the unprincipled rapacity of Verres.

Poetry, which seems to be the parent of civilization in every country, was most successfully cultivated here after the establishment of Syracuse and other places by the various colonies sent from Troy, Colchis, and Corinth. Amongst those who were more particularly distinguished in this harmonizing talent, the Sicilians of the present day delight in repeating the celebrated names of Aristipones of Selinuntæ, Stesichorus of Himera,

* M. Mariano Scasso; this gentleman's annotations on the history of Sicily are both extensive and entertaining, as he has, with few exceptions, divested himself of that *amor patriæ* which has induced so many authors to over step the modesty of nature in relating the events of their own country.

the renowned Empedocles, Theocritus, Epicarmus, and a host of others, who brought every species of versification, from the simple lays of a shepherd, to the more abstruse efforts of the epic muse, to the utmost perfection.

> Hic Phœbo digna, et musis venerabere vatum
> Ora excellentum, sacras qui carmina sylvas,
> Quique Siracusa resonant Helicona Camœna.*

The invention of comedy and pantomime is also ascribed to the poets of Sicily, who brought the representation of the former to such a degree of perfection that the nations of Greece were proud to imitate them. Epicarmus, who, in addition to his wonderful philosophical attainment, united that of poetry, was chosen as the model of Plautus.

> Plautus ad exemplar Siculi properasse Epicarmi.

Apollodorus of Gela was no less distinguished as a comic writer, and Empedocles, in tragedy, is supposed to have been unequalled by the greatest poets of Greece. Dionysius the elder is known to have composed several dramatic pieces; but their merits, from the few specimens handed down, have given the tyrant little more claim on the admiration of posterity, than the puerile attempts of Nero to gain the applause of the Roman citizens: the composition which he sent to be performed at the feast of Bacchus was, however, attended with

* Sil. Ital. l. xiv.

great success; but how easy, for a despotic prince, would it have been, to put the most splendid talents of his court into requisition upon such an occasion; indeed there are very few who have impartially contemplated the character of that monarch, and can believe him to have been susceptible of poetical feelings; so that Plutarch's opinion of his total inability as an author may be very readily believed.

The rapid progress of the muses in Sicily, was only the signal for advancement in all other branches of literature, science and philosophy. The immortal sage of Agrigentum,* who flourished about four hundred and sixty years before the christian era, appears to have united in himself all those stupendous talents which exalt a man above human nature; from having given the sublimest examples of tragic composition, he proceeded to lay the foundation of the rhetorical art, thence penetrating all the mazes of unexplored science, he wrote a number of universally admired productions upon natural history and astronomy; he is even supposed to have been the precursor of the Newtonian system; and closed his career as the brightest ornament of the Pythagorean philosophy. The panegyric of Lucretius upon this wonder of "all time," shews in what estimation his memory was held by the Romans:

* Empedocles.

Quorum Agrigentinus cum primis Empedocles est,
Insula quem Triquetris . . . . . .
Rebus opima bonis, multa munita virum vi;
Nil tamen hoc habuisse viro præclarius in se,
Nec sanctum magis, et mirum, carumque videtur.
Carmina quin etiam divini pectoris ejus
Vociferantur, et exponunt præclara repente;
Ut vix humana videatur stirpe creatus.

Tisias and Coraces, of Syracuse, taught rhetoric long after the death of Empedocles; and were, in their turn, eclipsed by Georgius of Leontini, who was considered by the Athenians as infinitely the greatest orator of his time; to him the names of many others are added; particularly those of Lisias, a Syracusan, highly praised by Plato, and Sophocles of Agrigentum.*

The learned of Sicily seem to have participated with the Greeks in all the philosophical dogmas of those days; and whether in the school of Pythagoras, Epicurus, or Aristotle, there was always a number of men in this island whose celebrity could only be exceeded by the founders of their respective schools. In the first of these Epicarmus attained a great name; it being said of him that he was as much superior to other men as the sun to the stars. Diccarcos, of Messina, acquired an uncommon degree of fame amongst the sect of

* Homo disertissimus, omni doctrina, et virtute ornatissimus, gravitur, ac copiose dixisse ac deplorasse dicitur apud Cn. Pompeium Consulem pro tota Sicilia de aratorum miseriis—*Cic. in Verr.*

Peripatetics, and was honored with the most unbounded applauses of Cicero and Pliny. Catania is also said to have given birth to Charondas, whose admirable laws were adopted by so many cities of Italy, as well as this island; it was that legislator who considered ignorance the principal source of every vice, and consequently prescribed that every class of the community should be regularly educated.

The Sicilian historians, in citing the names of Erodicus, Policletes, and Acrones as amongst the number of their greatest medical characters of antiquity, seldom omit the story of Menecrates of Syracuse; who, in consequence of some cures he effected, gave himself the title of Jove, and only required as a recompence from his patients, that they should follow him occasionally through the streets, in the character of slaves, but assuming the names of Apollo, Æsculapius, Hercules, &c.; he is even said never to have undertaken any journey without a long train of these subordinate deities. A curious letter of this fanatic is recorded by Atheneus, it is addressed to Philip of Macedon, and runs as follows:—"Menecrates Jove, to Phillip, health: you reign in Macedonia; but I reign in medicine: you can deprive those of life who are in good health; but I reanimate those who have lost it, restoring them to future salubrity, if they only attend to my directions: thou art surrounded with the Macedonian guards; and I by the people who are indebted to me for their

lives, which I, Jove, have bestowed on them in effecting their cure."

To this the laconic prince answered,—" Philip, to Menecrates, health and wisdom: I would advise you to repair to the Island of Anticera."* His correspondence with Agesilaus, as related by Plutarch, was attended with little better success: the letter to that monarch was very short:—" Menecrates Jove, to King Agesilaus, health!" to which he received this answer,—" The King Agesilaus, to Menecrates, sense!" Empiricism, but not that of modern times, observes the annotator upon Bourigny, is asserted to have originated in Sicily: this great *improvement* in the medical art is attributed to Acrones, contemporary of Empedocles.

Amongst the irretrievable losses caused to modern literature and science, by the unsparing hand of time, and other accidents, we shall ever have to regret that of the numerous and important historical productions of Sicilian writers. In transmitting the names of Antiochus the Syracusan, Andreone of Panormus, Ephorus, and many others, to posterity, it is almost a pity that the catalogue of their works should have been made known, as it only serves to increase our disappointment; yet a recollection of these ornaments of their country

* In the Archipelago, and famous for the number of hellebore plants found there, reputed by the ancients as a sovereign remedy for madness.

will perhaps serve in better times, to rouze the spirit dormant at the present day.

The most singular circumstance connected with the historical works of the island is, that several modern authors maintain that the celebrated retreat of the ten thousand, ascribed to Xenophon, was actually the composition of Themistogenes, a Syracusan historian, and in proof of the assertion, there is a passage quoted from his third book of the History of Greece, to this effect: "Those who are anxious to be informed of the history of Cyrus's war with his brother, will find it in Themistogenes of Syracuse, who has given a detailed account of it; they will perceive in what manner Cyrus secretly collected an army, with which he marched against Artexerxes; also a description of the battle that ensued, and how the Greeks returned."

Another writer of Italy, the P. Masio, pretends that the expedition of Cyrus the younger, could not have been written by Xenophon, observing that there is an evident contradiction between the Cyropedia and the Retreat of the Ten Thousand, in speaking of the way in which Cyrus became sovereign of the Medes and Persians. As this is not the place to prolong an argument which requires so much erudition, I leave it to other hands, but thought it too important to be passed over in silence.*

* If it was possible to establish a fact of this kind, Cicero's eulogy would, I think, experience some diminution.

Xenophontis voce musas quasi locutas ferunt!—*De Orat.*

Notwithstanding the wide-spread fame of Diodorus Siculus, his countrymen have always joined in the general censure of his great want of accuracy, and his numerous anachronisms. A writer of the fifteenth century, La Scaris, who taught the Belles Lettres in Italy and Messina, reported, that in 1450 he saw the whole of Diodorus's Universal History at Constantinople. Of all the anecdotes upon record, as calculated to illustrate the enthusiastic love of the Sicilians for literature, but more particularly poetry, the story of Plutarch relative to several of the prisoners taken on the defeat of Nicias's army before Syracuse, being restored to their country, in consequence of having recited the verses of Euripides, is uncommonly interesting. The perusal of that circumstance cannot but awaken the highest sentiments of admiration, and if true, which we have no reason to doubt, the ancients must certainly be allowed to have enjoyed a glory in which the moderns have never participated.

Wherever the more exalted branches of science are brought to perfection, the minor arts are sure to follow, and seem to be little more than the legitimate offspring of philosophy and letters. This accounts for the amazing progress of painting and sculpture in Sicily,* whose artists vied with,

* There is a literary character at Palermo who has written a work to prove that the Athenians were indebted to the people of Sicily for several important improvements in the mechanical and polite arts.

and very often went beyond, their competitors in Greece and Rome. The works of Pythagoras of Leontini, particularly his famous statue of Astylos,* which obtained the prize at the Olympic Games; and another of a cripple in Syracuse, has been the theme of Plato and several other writers. Demophilus of Himera, is equally celebrated as a painter, and by some supposed to have been the master of Xerxes, who is known to have studied at Agrigentum, to the inhabitants of which town, the former presented his renowned Alcmena as being without a price. In the mechanical arts they were more perfect than any of their neighbours, but this is a matter of very little surprize, when we recollect that Archimedes was a Sicilian.† With respect to music it is unnecessary to add, that there never was a country where that divine science was so warmly cultivated, and with more success, than in Sicily. It may also be said to have still retained a degree of originality unknown to any other of modern times. Apprehensive of dwelling too long upon this subject,

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* Eumdem vicit et Leontinus, qui fecit Stadiodromon Astylon, qui Olympiæ ostenditur: et Libyn puerum tenentem tabellam, eodem loco, et mala ferentem nudum.—PLIN. *Nat. Hist.*, lib. 34., n. 4.

† It is enough to mention the name of Archimedes! no praises, however eloquent, could add to his fame.

"Vir in omni geometria multum ante alios admirabili subtilitate."

which, however, interesting to my own feelings, may produce a very different effect on yours, I shall conclude with observing, that until the decline and fall of the Roman empire, the people of Sicily bore an ample share in the glories of those admirable times. Yielding to the fate of surrounding states, they were destined to sink once more into barbarism, and remain enveloped in that long night of darkness which oppressed the world for so many centuries, and from which they were happily enabled to emerge by the dissemination of christianity. If their subsequent progress towards mental perfection has been impeded by the manner of propagating a religion evidently intended for the diffusion of universal wisdom, and an intolerably oppressive mode of governing them, we may justly repeat with the poet, that the fault is not with them, but in their stars.

Whatever the inclinations of Ruggiero might have been as to the encouragement of letters, the profound ignorance in which he found the body of the people immerged, must have prevented any rapid improvement; and, to say the truth, little could be expected, if we reflect on the circumscribed state of letters in all the countries of Europe when he conquered Sicily. The ecclesiastical writers of the present day give a long list of churchmen, whom they assert to have flourished between the period of St. Paul's arrival and the invasion of the Saracens; but their

works, if any remain, have sunk into oblivion. It was reserved for the Emperor Frederic, in the thirteenth century, to stimulate his subjects by precept and example in the pursuit of reason, and discovery of truth, the foundation of which were previously laid by our own immortal countryman, Bacon. It is, indeed, a blessing for a people, when their monarch substitutes the arts of peace and promulgation of knowledge, to those of war and its attendant train of evils; they are justly hailed as the vicegerents of heaven, and honored with the undiminished praises of posterity. If the force of pernicious example in a ruler operates powerfully upon his subjects, it must be confessed that his virtues, while they shed an unfading lustre on the throne, produce the most salutary effects on the community at large.

Frederic not only encouraged the cultivation of useful learning, but is said to have been himself deeply versed in the science of natural history. His poetical effusions were in great repute; the following little stanza, preserved by Crescembini, may serve to give some idea of his talent in this way, and proves that the Italians had even then made a tolerable advance towards the purity it has acquired since.

Poiché ti piace amore
Ch' eo deggia trovare,
Faronde mia possanza,
Ch' eo regna a campimento,

Dato haggio lo mio core
In voi madonna amare.—*

While in Italy the refined genius of a Dante and a Petrarch were, by their poetical works, preparing the human mind for more solid advantages. The progress of letters in this island appears to have been comparatively slow. Amongst the contemporaries of Frederic, Vincenzo d' Alcamo

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* It is extremely difficult to reconcile the style of these lines with the following, ascribed to the same pen by Mr. de Voltaire, who asserts that the Italian language was not formed during Frederic's reign.

Plas me el Cavalier Frances,
E la donna Catelana
E l' ovrar Genoes,
E la danza Trevisana,
E lou cantar provensales,
Las man e cara d' angles,
E lou donzel de Toscana.

Mr. de Voltaire proceeds, "Ce monument est plus precieux qu' on ne pense, et est fort au dessus de tous ces decombres des bâtimens du moyen âge, qu' une curiosité grossière et sans goût recherche avec avidité. Il fait voir que la nature ne s' est dementie chez aucune des nations dont Frederic parle: les Catalanes sont, comme au temps de cet empereur, les plus belles femmes de l' Espagne; la noblesse Français a les mêmes grâces martiales qu' on estimoit alors; une peau douce et blanche, de belles mains, sont encore un chose commune en Angleterre; la jeunesse a plus d' agrémens en Toscane qu' ailleurs; les Genois ont conservi leur industrie; les Provençaux leur gout pour la poésie et pour le chant."—*Essai Sur les Mœurs, &c.*, tom. iii., p. 82.

is spoken of in terms of great praise, but very few of his productions have been handed down. The underwritten lines from this writer's pen are cited, as a proof that the present dialect of Sicily is derived from a mixture of the Latin and modern Italian.

Rosa fresca aulentissima capari in ver l' estate
Le donne te desiano pulcelle maritate;
Traeme de este focora, te tesse a bolontate.
Per te non ajo abento notte e dia,
Pensando pur di voi madonna mia.*

Animated by their usual self-love, some critical writers of this island insist that the Italian language has been altogether refined from the Sicilian dialect, which they add was the first deviation from the Latin; be this as it may, I am induced to apprehend that the construction and establishment of convents and churches were pursued with much more solicitude in those days than the concerns of literature; indeed, the only Sicilian who was particularly distinguished in the fourteenth century, is Tommaso Calorio, the intimate friend of Petrarch, who composed a beautiful Latin epigram on him.† The reign of Alphonso,

* If these are judged by the same criterion as the former, the reader will have very little difficulty in laying them at the door of some literary impostor of an infinitely later period.

† As this has probably never appeared in England, where that charming writer's merits are so duly appreciated, a transcript may not be altogether unacceptable.

of Arragon, which commenced in 1421, was very favorable to learning in Sicily, and a long list of the poets and historians of that day is upon record, but it was not until towards the seventeenth century that the literati of this island seem to have completely recovered from the imbecility of past times; and amongst many others who flourished at this period, the names of Scavuzzo, Tosano, Balducci, Del Boseo, Platamone, Giuffrida, Morello, and Garsia, distinguished themselves by their poetical compositions. The department of philosophy and natural history was illustrated by Boccone, Cupani, Carino, Gervasi, Materazzo, Gagliani, and Fazello.* In history and the belles lettres, the names of Rocco Pirri, In-

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Indolis atque animi, felicem cernite Thomam
Quem rapuit fati præcipitata dies.
Hunc dederat mundo tellus vicina Peloro,
Abstulit hæc eadem munus avara suum:
Florentemque nova juvenem virtute repente
Succidit; misero mors inimica mihi.
Anne igitur grates referam pro munere tanto,
Carminibus Siculum, littus ad astra ferens?
Anne gemam potius simul, indignorque rapinam
Phœbo? nihil miseris dulcius est gemitu.

* Tommaso Fazello, a Dominican monk, whose Latin history of Sicily from the earliest period down to his death, which occurred in 1570 at Palermo, is considered as one of the most respectable historians which the island has produced since the revival of literature; by the manner in which his name has been already alluded to, it will be recollected that he was rather tinctured with a love of the marvellous.

veges, Minutoli, Cajetano, Tornamira, Bonano, Mirabella, Mugnos, Parutta, Carrera, and Valguarnera, will always be gratefully remembered by the learned of Sicily. Since the above period, the want of the great incentives to learning, patronage, and a free press, has been a total bar to literary pursuits; a number of societies formed in the beginning of the last century are only known by their names, having, with the exception of one, that of *Il buon Gusto*, either had a nominal existence, or been instituted to no purpose; indeed it would be most highly preposterous to have looked for any great efforts from the literati of a country wherein the inquisition has been tolerated until about thirty years ago, and every imaginable obstacle thrown in the way of those who possessed the talent and inclination to enlighten their compatriots. If at a certain and not very remote period of their history, the people of Sicily had followed the example of ourselves, and thrown off those fetters which have bound their mental qualifications, I venture to assert, that at this day the island would exhibit a galaxy of genius unequalled in any country of Europe. I am justified in offering this opinion from a close and attentive examination of those who form the literary community in various parts of Sicily, particularly Palermo, Catania, and Messina, in all of which cities there are many persons whose classical and scientific attainments reflect the highest honour on the age in which

they live; at present I am sorry to say that many pine in neglected poverty; others have long been singled out as the objects of unmerited persecution; and the whole are naturally prevented from corroborating my humble opinion, till the period at which their talents may be called into useful activity by an order of things very different from those which unhappily exist at present.

When I observe that the chief, and in fact, only means of entering into learned pursuits, are confined to the clergy and students of law, it is almost unnecessary to add, that the literary talents of Sicily are divided between these two professions; the former, however, claim a decided superiority as to numbers, and it affords me very sincere pleasure to say, that a more liberal minded set of men than the *learned* clergy of Sicily, are not to be found any where.*

The Abate Piazza is no less distinguished for the amiableness of his manners, than for those deep researches in the science of astronomy, which have ranked him amongst the most celebrated

* Having requested a correspondent who lives in the Val di Noto, and is himself a clergyman, to furnish me with some hints relative to the members of his sacred profession in the island, he sent me the following laconic opinion.

"Tra l' ecclesiastici molti da bene, molti con lumi teologici, morale, storie, matematiche, astronomia, lettere umane, ma coloro sono tra l' incogniti, tra gli oscuri, tra i poveri.

"Frati qualche moralista raro, raro, raro! qualche da bene rarissimo! qualch' uno di lettere rarissimo, si rarissimo!"

characters of Europe; in England, or at Paris, such a man would be infinitely more useful to his species than here, where, with a paucity of means, and circumscribed income, he has already done much.

The names of Meli, Nascè, Le Donni, Monti, Mango, Calidi, Vesco, Lenzi, Ferrari, and many others, amongst the clergy, are universally revered in this island, not only for their philosophical and literary talents, but for the practice of those virtues which render men estimable in every country, and of whatever religion.

Prince Torremuzza, son to the most celebrated antiquarian of Sicily, is much esteemed for his attachment to literary pursuits, and has prepared a very voluminous history of the knights of Malta, down to the period of their dismemberment. I have seen his manuscript, and am inclined to believe, that when given to the public, which cannot take place in the present state of Sicily, it will be found to contain a number of interesting particulars which the Abbé Vertot could have had no means of procuring, independent of the interest which its continuation must excite. The prince, although occupying a public situation, is by far more devoted to study than politics, and like a philosopher, prefers the tranquil pleasures of domestic life, to the fawning servility of an attendance at court. As a chemist, the Abate Meli is particularly distinguished, and has filled that chair for many

years in the university with great success; he is still more conspicuous as the most celebrated poet Sicily has produced in modern times. It is peculiarly unfortunate that this great man did not adopt the Italian idiom, but native genius is not to be controled; and the Abate, in having chosen the Sicilian dialect as the medium of communicating his uncommon talent for poetry, has certainly gratified the wishes of his countrymen, and at the same time given the vernacular tongue an importance which it could not have derived from any other source. The works of this favorite bard were published some years ago in Palermo: they consist principally of a paraphrase of Don Quixote in twelve cantos, several satires, eclogues, idyls, sonnets, &c., and amongst these innumerable beauties are to be found; nor are they so obscured, but that a tolerably good Italian scholar may understand them with the greatest facility; a glossary is also added for the information of foreigners. As this author's poetry is so very little known in England, and the most superficial Italian scholar can easily understand his style, I hope the introduction of one or two quotations from him will be excused, made with a view of proving that, like the dialect of Scotland, that of Sicily possesses certain charms of native simplicity which are unknown to the most refined languages of Europe.

Although a clergyman, the Abate Meli has treated amatory subjects with peculiar success,

and it has been justly observed, that the Sicilian is peculiarly adapted for these, or pastoral poetry. "Lu Labbru," the lip, is particularly well conceived; a lover observes the bee wandering about at dawn, before the rose-buds have expanded, and addresses it in the following beautiful terms:

* * * * * * * * *

"——Ma l' aluzza s' affatica!
Ma tu voli, e fai caminu!
Dimmi, dimmi, apuzza nica,
Unni vai cusi matinu

Cherchi meli? E siddu è chissu,
Chuide l' ali; e' un ti straccari;
Ti lu 'nzignu un locu fissu,
Unni ài sempri, chi sucari;

Lu conusci lu miu amuri,
Nici mia di l' occhi beddi?
'Ntra ddi labbri c' è un sapuri,
'Na ducizza, chi mai speddi.

'Ntra lu labbru culuritu
Di lu caru amatu beni,
C' è lu meli, chiu esquisitu
Suca; sucala, ca veni!"

Amongst the many elegies composed by the Abate, there are some remarkably plaintive, and full of poetical expression. The Lamentation of Heraclitus, is very much admired, as also the Idyl of Polemuni, which represents a man aban-

doned by fortune, seated on a rock washed by the billows, and deploring his misfortunes:

"—Quannu, ahimè! poi si canciare
La mia sorti 'ngannatrici,
Mtra un momentu mi livau
Varca, riti, amanti, amici!"

is an idea very frequently realized in this world, and could not be more happily expressed. His eclogues are nearly in the style of Pope and Collins; they are admired for an ease and simplicity which do not belong to either of the foregoing. In one of these, three fishermen's daughters are assembled on the sea shore, waiting for the return of their parents, and having no other occupation, begin to sing the praises of their respective lovers. Lidda, the last speaker, in order to illustrate the strength and delicacy of her attachment, is placed at the window with the distaff in her hand, which she suffers to fall when her favorite passes, in the hope that he will take it up and bring it to her again, in this she is not deceived.

Quannu a culicchia jeu vogghiu parrari
La spissu spissu mi veni lu sfilu;
A la Finestra mi mettu a filari;
Quannu' iddu passa poi rumpu lu filu;
Cadi lu fisu; ed eu mettu a gridari:
Gnuri pri carità pruitimilu;
Iddu lu pigghia; mi metti a guagdani;
Jeu mi nni vaju suppilu suppilu.—

The Abate Meli may be considered as the

Burns of Sicily, with this very material difference, that he is a most excellent classical scholar, and distinguished chemist. His external appearance is not much calculated to give you any idea of his great talents; he is about sixty years of age, and like most men of transcendant merit, was for a long period suffered to remain in obscurity by the Sicilian government; and he owes his insertion amongst the list of pensioners to a very curious circumstance, which serves not a little to mark the character of the times we live in. The king having fractured his leg, a tedious cure ensued, during which his Majesty understood that one of his subjects had acquired great celebrity by his Sicilian poetry; the Abate's works were forthwith directed to be brought to the palace, and afforded his majesty an unexpected source of amusement, upon which a gratuity of fifty pounds per annum was settled on the author! To his numerous other merits it should be added, that the Abate's society is universally courted as the most facetious companion in the island. There are innumerable poets of a minor class in Sicily, as both the Italian and their own language offer amazing facility to versification. A Mr. F. Guegli, whom I met at Palermo, is an exception to the rhiming tribe; next to Meli he is esteemed the best poet in the island, and has published both in Sicilian and the Italian, with considerable success; he has composed five volumes of tales and fables in the vernacular tongue, but like all the bards of

Sicily, poor Guegli languishes in poverty, and I fear many years will pass before a *Mæcenas* is likely to spring up amongst his countrymen.*

As an antiquarian, of whom there are many, the Chevalier Calcagni stands foremost in Sicily; he is a man of very extensive erudition, and, which is equally necessary in that pursuit, unconquerable perseverance. His late work on Fenzia and Liparo, two kings of Syracuse, unnoticed in the history of that celebrated city, if published in England would have secured the Chevalier a place in our most learned societies; here it has had no other effect than that of putting him to a considerable expense for publication, although from the opinion of many, it is both a learned and

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* The following sonnet, describing the state of Europe at the close of 1810, from the pen of Mr. Guegli, may be considered as a favorable specimen of his poetical talents.

Fischia il nembo di guerra, e il turbin fiero
Cinge l' Europa, egrandinar minaccia;
Lutta il mar con la terra e Marte altero
Sfida Nettuno, e fra l' orror si caccia.
Intrepido qua e la l' Anglo guerriero
Chiama il nemico, e su lo spran si affaccia;
Vurtansi i venti, e il Tridentato Impero
Rinserra i lidi, ed ambo i poli abbraccia.
Squassa l' urna del tempo il destin crudo
Sul Tamigi, e la Senna arresta il ciglio
Mentre Sicilia al suo Signor fa scudo.
Sull' arca della fede ella si asside,
E galleggiando fra il commun periglio,
Quata sicura la tempesta, e ride.

interesting production; several others remain with Mr. Calcagni in manuscript: with his politics I do not wish to interfere, but have to hope that they are favorable to the true interests of his unfortunate country.

Vella, although acknowledged to be profoundly versed in the Arabic, is censured by all the literati with considerable asperity, for a disposition to make innovations which are more favourable to the court than the people. He has drawn upon himself the obloquy of several legal characters, in consequence of his translation of an old Arabic code, which the former positively assert to be little more than what in England is designated by the title of a *literary hoax;* as if the oriental languages were necessary to the better government of this island. He has always been warmly patronized by his Sicilian Majesty.

With the best intentions on earth, we are sometimes led into error. This has, I really believe, been the Abate Balsamo's case. He had nearly recovered the effects of the prejudice and censure heaped upon him by his own countrymen, for the publication of his *Giornale;* but to be dragged before the tribunal of English criticism, was too much for the Abate's feelings; and he is known to have said, that he had no previous idea of Mr. Vaughan's making a book out of an *Abbozzo*, to which he never attached the smallest importance. I confess it would have been much better for his literary reputation if he had never given the above

imperfect work to the public; but whatever its merits may be, those who know the author will not deny him every praise for a large fund of good sense, and suavity of manner, which make him one of the most agreeable companions in Palermo. He remained two years in England under the tuition of Arthur Young, in order to acquire a knowledge of agriculture; but his attainments in that way have, unfortunately never been called into exertion here.

The Abate is an excellent English scholar, and the intimate friend of Belmonte, of whom so much has been lately said.

As professors of different universities, the names of Monti, Nascè, Mango, Lenzi, Scimonelli, and others already mentioned, hold a distinguished rank. In the law, many might be cited to prove, that, however badly it is administered, there are persons deeply versed in that science. Those, however, who have at any time shown a disposition to oppose the existing system, have not failed to excite the utmost hatred and persecution of that class, who feel an interest in perpetuating oppression and injustice. This fully accounts for many persons, who are the brightest ornaments of their profession, having been reduced from a state of opulence to one of absolute want. I could also repeat the names of a few, against whom premeditated combinations have been formed to deprive them of their patrimony. These have, in many instances, but too well succeeded, and left the

victims to deplore the "crime of their nativity." While I sympathize most warmly with these meritorious and highly distinguished characters, no expressions of mine would be sufficiently eloquent to paint their situations and sufferings, doomed to drag on a life of useless exclusion, in the midst of their books, observing the tardy measures of a temporizing and ruinous policy; while in the senate, or at the bar, they would remind the people of Sicily, that neither the names or example of a Georgius or a Sophocles have been transmitted to posterity in vain!—It is for those in whose power the most ample means have been placed, to penetrate the haunts of Sicilian learning, and be taught, by their experience and wisdom, how this island can be improved from its present melancholy situation to one wherein virtue will find a reward, and patriotism a refuge.

Those who at present fill the avenues of the law in this island will be long remembered by the people, not for their talents or virtues, but for an implicit obedience to the will of the court, and having brought what our immortal bard calls the "law's delay, and proud man's contumely," into universal practice and perfection.

I need scarcely repeat the names of Artali, Parisi, Fereri, Pasqualino, Leone, Troisi, and Cupani, as the chief support, and active promoters, of that system of jurisprudence which has placed the meaning of right and wrong, retribution and punishment, in Sicily, infinitely more obscure and

undefined than these sources of all law are in the kingdoms of Tunis or Algiers.

I am, however, proud of being enabled to draw a contrast between iniquity and virtue, real talents and sophisticated quibbling. Amidst the painful recapitulation of so many unpleasant truths, I could exult in the opportunity which the present subject affords me of introducing to your notice a man, who, in my humble opinion, rises far above the generality of his contemporaries in every department of literary science. If it had been the fate of this man to be born and educated in a free country, if not loaded with honours and emolument, his transcendant abilities would have, at least, been honoured with the applause of the public; even here, there are many who look up to him as the Seneca of his day; and I will venture to add, that few countries of Europe can boast of a better classical scholar, more profound lawyer, or nervous orator.* His manuscripts, amounting to about sixty volumes, are in reserve for other times, for it is his misfortune to be a Sicilian.

"Full many a gem, of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathom'd caves of Ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air!"

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* The translator of Bourigni very justly observes—"In un governo dispotico l'arte de ben parlare non è l'ordinario sentiero che conduce alla fortuna."—In fact, there is scarcely any public speaker known in the island.

If a British minister, supported by a British army, was not in Sicily, and ready to protect the innocent against oppression, I should have felt some repugnance in even alluding to such a character; but I still entertain a hope there will be a time when our diplomatists may know the importance, and feel the necessity, of distinguishing between the real friends of England and others, "against whose fawning treachery no prudence can guard, no courage can defend," and whose "insidious smile upon the cheek" should "warn them of the canker in the heart."*

A great many of the obstacles which oppose the progress of literature may with equal justice be applied to the minor arts of sculpture and painting; and I regret to be unable to record the name of one of the former profession worth mentioning; indeed it is almost impossible to imagine that in an island which gave birth to Pythagoras and Demophilos, this divine art should be so completely obliterated;

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* It will not, I trust, be for an instant supposed, that, in having quoted a few passages from Junius, I make myself in any manner a party in those illiberalities against one of the most unimpeachable and polished countries of Europe which have disgraced his admirable style of composition. Of the very few persons whom I have been hitherto enabled to hail by the gratifying appellation of friend, it affords me much happiness to say that the greater part are natives of that country.

I have been exclusively induced to have recourse to Junius, because there was no language, in my opinion, too strong to mark the character of those whom it has been my invidious province to expose.

and, with one solitary exception, the whole body of Sicilian painters have very little claim beyond the merit of painting signs, being, in fact, the most consummate daubs in Europe.

Still you will already have anticipated the name of Velasquez, who has studied in Italy to very considerable advantage. Although his continued occupation upon altar-pieces, and other sacred subjects, must have cramped the genius of this artist, his pictures exhibit a freedom of design and truth of colouring, not to be met with in countries where painters receive much greater encouragement, and whose pictures are often preferred to those of the Lombard or Venetian school.

Mr. Velasquez, although beyond sixty, continues to paint himself and instruct others: with his talents in the fine arts, he unites the qualities of virtue and benevolence.

If the comparative perfection of the fine arts in this island, and the neighbouring countries of Greece and Rome, may be judged by the relative beauty of their medals and coins, Sicily certainly claims a most decided preference.* Those of Syra-

* How much is it to be regretted that the British government should still be so indifferent as to the discovery and purchase of antique monuments. This would not, surely, be the case, if ministers knew what glory they would acquire by a contrary system. I will venture to add, that Buonaparte has done more by his exertions in this way than whole armies would have performed for him; and while, during his sanguinary sway, the arts have flourished in France beyond what they did in any former

cuse, Agrigentum, Messina, and Palermo, as preserved in the collections of Prince Biscari, Marquis Cardillo, and various others, exhibit the most beautiful specimens of taste and correctness of design imaginable. Mr. Drummond, one of our late embassadors at the court of Palermo, and whose profound erudition is well known in the literary world, purchased one of the best collections in the above way to be found in the island, from the Chevalier Calcagni, a short time before his departure for England: if, like some others, it is destined to remain locked up in some nobleman's closet, the public will be unable to estimate the treasure which has been thus imported.

I have before said, that the Sicilian Music is remarkable for originality. To form a correct estimate of its beauties, one should visit the interior, and frequent the "deep embowering glades," where shepherds resort; for the beautiful and plaintive simplicity of Sicilian airs requires an association of time and place, before they can convey that ecstacy of feeling which so many people have experienced in travelling through the island. I have more than once had an opportunity of realizing the truth of this remark, particularly on one occasion, when leaving a small town in Val

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period of its history, he has secured the important approbation of the literati, and a degree of fame that will be prized by posterity when his crimes and ambition are marked with its abhorrence.

di Mazzara, called Caltavuturo, built on the eastern summit of one of the most picturesque and romantic valleys that can be conceived. The weather being very serene, my attention was suddenly arrested by the performance of a pastoral air some distance below me; and which, from its effect amongst the rocks and surrounding precipices, seemed to be the most enchanting strain I had ever heard. The scene itself was almost sufficient to remind one of being in the country of Acis and Galatea; but the unexpected harmony of sounds which burst upon me, recalled feelings and recollections which may be imagined, but are far beyond the power of description. Determined to ascertain from what quarter this source of pleasure flowed, I dismounted, and winding through a path-way which led me, under the shade of some lofty elms, to a rising ground near which a brook was running, I observed a young peasant, surrounded with a flock of sheep and goats: his countenance was expressive of that simplicity only to be found in honest minds; he appeared to have just finished an humble repast of bread and cheese, the remains of which the faithful companion of his solitude was devouring very heartily. I begged to see the instrument upon which he had just been playing. What was my surprize on finding that it was a piece of cane, about four inches in length, and only perforated with three holes. I observed that surely this was not the instrument I had heard on the hill,

pointing to the town, and requested he would repeat the same tune; he did so, with a number of others, which gratified me excessively; but the romantic charm was soon dissolved; and in taking my leave of this child of rusticity, I felt once more that I was in Sicily at the commencement of the nineteenth century!

There are several excellent composers of the native music in all the principal towns of the island; and the vocal talents evinced by the Sicilian ladies deserve the warmest panegyric: their songs are never heard to so much advantage as when accompanied by the guitar, an instrument universally understood, and much practised by both sexes.

Amongst the more refined musical composers, and who have acquired considerable celebrity in Sicily, there is a young man who has attracted very great notice lately by his oratorio of Joseph, which has been uncommonly well received at Palermo. Grimaldi is a first-rate violin performer, but could never be prevailed on to leave the island, although he has received some very flattering offers. Sarmenti is the person who composed the oratorio of Joseph; he is not more than twenty-five years of age. Another young man, named Rosso, is much celebrated as a musical composer.

Having attempted to give you an imperfect sketch of Sicilian literature and learned men, I cannot conclude without expressing my regret,

that the few who are here have not the means of being more intimately known to our men of science and societies in England; nor do I think that any of the latter have a single correspondent in Sicily. This, if once prevalent, would enable our countrymen to appreciate the merits of men whose approbation by a studious encouragement is intrinsically useful, but rendered absolutely necessary, if we are desirous of being considered as friends to the inhabitants. The influence of letters, even on an ignorant population, is much greater than many people are willing to allow; and here I can say with truth, that it is only exceeded by that of religion.

I have frequently heard some of the most erudite characters of this island express themselves very feelingly upon the apparent indifference with which they have been treated by the English literati, and in some instances our representatives. These observations have been usually attended by strong hints upon the characters who have experienced occasional, though very circumscribed, patronage.* The marked attention paid to this subject by the French government is one of the very few examples on its part which we might follow with advantage. As a proof of the former part of my assertion, I could point out

* One or two Sicilian authors have been induced to dedicate their works to some of our officers; this practice is, however, I believe, exploded, as being both "stale and unprofitable."

several men of learning here who have received the Code Napoleon from Buonaparte himself. Arts and persuasions of every description have not been left untried, to induce a transfer of their voluntary attachment towards the British, to the Ruler of France. This they have wisely rejected, considering that, with all our defects, we have better intentions, and more sincerity, than the modern scourge of human nature. In fact, the Sicilian literati have hitherto attributed our political faults to errors of judgment rather than those of the heart; and I sincerely hope, that so liberal a construction of our conduct will be realized by future events.

The impossibility of forming any society composed of learned men, in the actual state of things, is self-evident: such an association would alarm the enemies of freedom and civil liberty beyond conception; yet, in England, experience must convince you, that where those excitements to learning are wanted, and a free press unknown, it is in vain to look for improvement and happiness.

The mode of conducting all the public libraries, and the total exclusion of the best authors in Europe from them, are sad grievances, worthy of the most Gothic age. In a recent instance, the only spirited bookseller in Palermo, Mr. Abbate, went to the continent, and made a large collection of French and German literature, at a very heavy expense. On his return here, the catalogue was inquired for:

he produced it; and, on being read by what is called the *Censore*,* several thousand volumes,

* There is a *Censore* appointed by the court in each of the principal cities, through whose hands every thing intended for publication must go; these gentlemen are of course invariably selected from the priesthood; nor do I know of one of them who possesses any talents. I have seen the most beautiful specimens of poetical composition rejected by them; indeed, it very seldom happens that they sanction the publication of any thing that has the most distant tendency to political discussion, which is one reason why none of the literati will submit their works for inspection. This accounts for the innumerable manuscripts which remain on the shelves of all the learned.

If, however, a free press is ever accorded to the people of Sicily, God forbid that it should degenerate into licentiousness and venality, by which, instead of becoming a blessing, it would, in many instances, operate as a curse upon the nation. Forbid it Heaven that any future government of this island should be formed upon such a foundation, as to dread a free and impartial examination of its conduct on the one hand, or be obliged to resort to the means of corruption for the support of its legitimate authority on the other. It is of equal importance that those who may be the future guardians of civil liberty here, should direct their talents to a disinterested discharge of that most sacred office of instructing the public, and guiding their opinion. Persons who assume that arduous task, ought to recollect that they become the servants of the state, and that their time should not be occupied in gratifying feelings of private animosity. If a man's zeal for the common cause of humanity sometimes leads him beyond the bounds of strict propriety, ought he, upon that account, to be singled out as the object of legal persecution? and is a brother journalist, labouring in the same cause, to abandon his post, for the purpose of making a formal literary attack upon his neighbour? are the columns of his paper to be occupied with personal slander, while the theme of patriotism is

including the works of Voltaire, Rousseau, D'Alembert, and many others, were seized, and forthwith deposited in a convent, where they have remained ever since open to the friars. Every application on the part of the bookseller to recover his property has failed.

The scarcity of English works here is hardly to be credited; this was strikingly exhibited a few days ago. When it was in agitation to form the present ministry, who, as a proof of their friendly disposition towards the people, declared their determination of giving them an English constitution; one difficulty was, however, completely overlooked. On examining all the libraries of Palermo, an abundance of law writers, from Quinctilian down to the Pere Mathieu, were found, but it was in vain they sought for the one absolutely necessary to give any idea of our code. The embassador's house was searched with equal success; at the secretary of legation's it was in vain to look for law books; in fact, there was not to be found in the capital of Sicily a single edition of Blackstone's Commentaries!—it will, therefore, be necessary to wait the return of a packet from England before the new arrangements are finally

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omitted? or was the privilege of free discussion bestowed on him for the ignoble purpose of ranging himself under the banner of an ambitious faction? No, the press was designed by Heaven for wiser purposes; and woe to that nation wherein its utility or original intention is violated by the depravity or weakness of those whose duty it is to make it the vehicle of religious truth and morality.

made. Should any work be sent here that professes to expose the people's sufferings, it is suppressed with the utmost assiduity, and attended with the most fulminating anathemas. Mr. Leckie's admirable exposition of the island's situation is not to be procured for any consideration. I do not even think that excellent production is in possession of many to whom a knowledge of its contents is really necessary so as to enable them to form any judgment of the true state of Sicily.

These and a thousand other considerations might be mentioned; amongst the rest, figure to yourself a population of nearly two millions, without there being a single newspaper,* or periodical print, published, to inform them of their situation, or how things are passing. The bare mentioning this extraordinary fact is quite enough to excite the regret and astonishment of an English reader. For the present, I take my leave of the literati of Sicily.—Would that it had fallen to their lot to have had their many grievances exposed, and talents illustrated by a more able advocate; for, in discharging what I have felt to be a pleasing and necessary duty, it has only been in my power to offer them, not the charms of fine composition; but the homage of truth and sincerity.

* The Gazette Britannica, published at Messina in Italian, and under the auspices of the commander-in-chief, is supposed to do much more harm than good, being edited by a Neapolitan priest, whose political principles are best known to himself, but not altogether unobserved by those who have read his journal for a period of some years.

LETTER XII.

L'agricoltura, la pastorizia sono intieramente perdute l'arte di fare e purificare i vini non si conosce piu, e perduta, non lo crederebbero si renasscessero ed Aristotile, e Ciceroni, e Marziale, e gli astronomi Greci, li Gueponici! *Anon.*

Agriculture of Sicily—Oppressive Policy of the Barons—Laws and Exactions—State of the Peasantry—Monopolies—Proposed Encouragements—State of Mendicity—Concluding Remarks.

Sicily, 1811.

Mr. Leckie, from his personal experience as a practical farmer in this island, has elucidated the defects of its agricultural system so clearly, that he has left but very little for others to say. The Abate Balsamo, who is considered by many of his countrymen to be a good proficient in that useful science, has also enumerated, under ten different heads, the various improvements of which it is susceptible.* The subject is, however, of

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* A perusal of these will show, that every thing which has conduced to the perfection of agriculture in England is wanting in Sicily.

1st. A more general division of capital and lands.

2d. The partition of the lands into inclosures as in England, &c.

3d. More meadows and cattle than there are.

4th. A better rotation of crops; always taking care that the

such vast importance to the interests and prosperity of Sicily, that the relation of any circumstances tending, in the smallest degree, to illustrate the causes of its decay, cannot be unacceptable. By no means deeply versed in agricultural pursuits, I enter into the following discussion with the utmost diffidence, and shall confine myself to a recapitulation of those remarks which must occur to the most superficial observer who visits the island.

The present wretched state of cultivation is the more surprizing when it is considered that, unlike most other countries of Europe, an almost uninterrupted summer is experienced in Sicily; and such is the natural fertility of the soil, that it does not require one half the labour or expense necessary

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same productions do not succeed each other too rapidly, and that proper intervals are allowed between different plants.

5th. More variety and perfection in the implements of agriculture.

6th. The practice of manuring the lands more generally, and adoption of those methods of enriching ground resorted to in other countries.

7th. The introduction of a greater variety of plants, and cultivation in the farms, &c.

8th. To clothe the mountainous parts with wood, and increase planting generally.

9th. To improve the quality of various productions, particularly wine, oil, cheese, flax, fruits, &c.

10th. To preserve grain from the blast, *(la volpe,)* by making use of the broom-rape, &c.

The learned Abate might have, I think, added, with great propriety, "the speedy adoption of wholesome laws."

in more northern climates. The satellites of government, and a few others who are interested in the continuation of existing evils, falsely assert, that the progressive deficiency in the crops from 1800 to the present disastrous period has been solely caused by the badness of the seasons, and not the existence of cruelly oppressive laws, which, it is well known, are the real source of those accumulated miseries that have assailed the lower classes of society, and, in fact, all the community, during the last ten years. History does not, I believe, furnish a single example of any country, however barren, having been visited with the vengeance of Heaven for so long a period. But a slight examination of facts will soon prove the iniquitous fallacy of these people, alike the enemies of Sicily and of human nature.

To form a general and correct idea of where the impediments to agriculture originate, you cannot do better than read Adam Smith's second chapter on the Wealth of Nations. One of the passages in it is, however, so very applicable to my present object, that I hope to be excused for quoting it here.

"In the ancient state of Europe, the occupiers of land were all tenants at will: they were all, or almost all, slaves; but their slavery was of a milder kind than that known among the ancient Greeks and Romans, or even in our West India colonies; they were supposed to belong more directly to the land than their master; they could, therefore, be

sold with it, but not separately; they could marry, provided it was with the consent of their master, and he could not afterwards dissolve the marriage, by selling the man and wife to different persons. If he maimed or murdered any of them, he was liable to some penalty, though generally but to a small one: they were not, however, capable of acquiring property; whatever they acquired was for their master, and he could take it from them at pleasure. Whatever cultivation and improvement could be carried on by means of such slaves was properly carried on by their master; it was at his expense; the seed, the cattle, and the implements of husbandry, were all his; it was for his benefit. Such slaves could acquire nothing but their daily maintenance; it was properly the proprietor himself, therefore, that in this case occupied his own lands, and cultivated them by his own bondmen."

In the above few lines you have, with very little variation, an exact picture of the Sicilian peasantry. Mr. Smith's succeeding remark cannot be too deeply impressed on the minds of the barons of this island.

"But if great improvements are seldom to be expected from great proprietors, they are least of all to be expected when they employ slaves for their workmen. The experience of all ages and nations, I believe, demonstrates, that the work done by slaves, though it appears to cost only their maintenance, is in the end the dearest of any!"

It would almost appear that this justly celebrated writer had passed a great part of his life in this island.

A continuation of the "*Dritto di Angaria*," in all the baronial fiefs, which occupy more than half of Sicily, and are nearly all in possession of thirty families, is of itself more than sufficient to produce the present state of things; but, in explaining the difficulties encountered by the cultivators, the subject will be still more clearly developed.

As the barons scarcely ever visit their estates, much less live on them for any part of the year, there is a governor appointed to act in their place, and administer all the domestic concerns of the respective fiefs. This officer has extensive magazines in charge, containing the productions of preceding harvests,* which are forestalled according to circumstances, and sold, either wholesale or retail, to the best bidders. A proportion of grain and pulse is, however, reserved to be distributed amongst the vassals, who may not have a sufficient quantity to sow in their grounds, for which they pay an annual rent to the baron. In this case they apply to the governor, with whom it is necessary to live upon good terms, no matter by what species of servility soever his favour is acquired. After some days passed in useless negotiation, the poor

* A good harvest in Sicily is said to yield 3,000,000 salms of wheat: in former years it was not unusual to export 2 and 300,000 salms.

man receives so many measures of wheat, beans, &c. with a proviso that he is to return them with interest when the next harvest shall be gathered. It very frequently occurs that he is obliged to put up with the refuse of the corn, and, as within these several years, obliged to appropriate a part which is given him, for the purpose of sowing, to the maintenance of his own family. The labourer is next obliged to negotiate with the governor for so many ploughs and oxen to turn up the ground, which he obtains upon terms so unfavourable, in general, as to preclude the possibility of doing justice to that necessary operation in husbandry; for instance, if the nature and extent of his farm requires twenty animals and four ploughs, he is seldom, if ever, enabled to pay for, or procure above half that number: these are let out to him, at a heavy rent, for a specific period; at the end of which, whether the land is ill or well done, they must be returned. I am informed, that a fortnight, and sometimes even a month's delay is occasioned to the poor cultivators, before they can make all these arrangements with the governors, who are for the most part objects of indiscriminate detestation.

It is altogether superfluous to make any observation upon the almost certain effects of bad ploughing or delay in sowing; a scantiness in the quantity of seed must be equally fatal to the future harvest; yet the foregoing is but a small part of the hardships experienced by the Sicilian peasant.

Having with incredible labour succeeded in laying down the seeds, he is then obliged to look out for the means of supporting his children, if he is so unfortunate as to have any: a few goats and poultry, for hardly any of the lower orders are able to keep cows, assist him in this respect. The injuries occasioned to his crop, by there being no inclosures, are endless; and what with the care of his little flock, and attention to the corn-fields, it may be readily imagined that these poor people have not much respite during winter: this would not be felt, if they could look forward to brighter days, or entertain a hope that any benefit would be derived from the fruit of their labours; on the contrary, that period which is in England the source of universal hilarity, is here turned into a scene of melancholy and regret:* for no sooner is the corn cut and deposited in the granaries, than officers go round from the *Reale Patrimonio* department to enforce the *Revello*, one of the most oppressive ordinances in the island; it consists in every person declaring the exact quantity of grain and pulse his ground has yielded; upon

* When shall we be able to apply Thomson's beautiful imagery to the people of Sicily?

——The harvest treasures all
Now gather'd in, beyond the rage of storms
Sure to the swain; the circling fence shut up,
And instant winter's utmost rage defy'd:
While, loose to festive joy, the country round
Laughs with the loud sincerity of mirth,
Shook to the wind their cares!——*Seasons. Autumn.*

which he is debarred from selling any part till the pleasure of the above tribunal is made known; on the other hand, the governor is at liberty to enforce repayment for his advances. Innumerable acts of oppression take place * while these circumstances are going forward, and the poor peasant has no other resource except that of patient resignation; at length, after the reports from all parts of the island are examined at Palermo, the *Reale Patrimonio* determine on the quantity required for home consumption, upon which they fix their own price, no matter how disproportioned to the value of labour or other considerations: on their being satisfied, the peasant is next to satisfy his landlord in kind, not money, and if any remains, a very rare circumstance, he may either dispose of it, or keep it for the immediate support of his family. You will doubtless imagine, that the evils attendant upon these ill-fated people are at an end in this stage of their concerns; alas! they only appear to begin! for on satisfying the inexorable agents of *Reale Patrimonio* and the governor, the tax gatherers make their appearance, to collect the well known *Gabelli*, or imposts, which, by a strange application of the principles of justice and poli-

* The corn laws of some districts have been found so oppressive, that many cultivated shumac and soda in preference, both of which articles are at present a mere drug in the Sicilian market.

tical economy, are placed upon all the necessaries of life, such as flour, oil, wine, the slaughtering of cattle, &c., &c., &c., hereafter to be noticed. With respect to the Revello I should observe, that while that unjust right is most scrupulously enforced on the lower classes of society, the governors and people possessing a little money evade it most effectually, by the timely interposition of a bribe, which enables those who offer it to hoard up their corn and force its price; this explains one source of the imaginary scarcity that is so often said to prevail. Returning to the peasant, should he want to get a sack of corn ground for immediate use, he is obliged to hire a mule in order to take it to the mill, where, besides paying for grinding, a tax, called *La Gabella della Macina*, is exacted: this varies in different parts of the country from three shillings to ten on each salm of wheat: upon all other articles of food there is also a duty paid, the revello being enforced upon every species of taxed produce. It is by reflecting upon the foregoing facts, and tracing the unhappy alternatives to which a vassal must shortly be reduced, under the pressure of so many hardships, that the cause of such interminable mendicity is to be found. The poor Sicilian labourer, with an uncommon degree of patience and honest industry, supported by his faith in the beneficence of that Power "who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," stems the torrent of adversity which opposes his

utmost endeavours to exist, until he perceives that every effort is fruitless, and each succeeding year marked with an additional weight of sorrow; he at length yields to his sad destiny, and with the partner of his past toils and their innocent offspring leaves the scenes of early life to seek the precarious, but apparently more independent, means of existence in the casual charity of an obdurate world. This is not an imaginary picture of the Sicilian peasantry, it is drawn from actual observation, and might have been heightened by those afflicting accessories which are the never failing attendants of emigration in every country; I am, however, principally desirous of addressing your understanding, and in doing that I shall not fail to interest the heart.

In travelling through the interior, you are at every step irresistibly reminded of those scenes which Goldsmith has so pathetically described in his inimitable poem of the Deserted Village. Whilst rambling through the Val de Mazzara a few weeks ago, and very near the Temple of Segesta, I observed a female and five little children running towards me from a distant field; and, prompted by curiosity, stopped to see what they wanted: on a nearer approach I perceived that they were all more than half naked. The poor mother, for it was unnecessary to ask whose children those were in her company, began to relate her tale of misery; her husband, whom she left asleep in a neighbouring field, was formerly

the inhabitant of a village near Salemi; forced to abandon their cottage, through bad seasons and other causes, they went to Trapani, in the hope of obtaining some employment; it was not to be procured, and after three days perambulation in the streets of that town, without getting a sufficiency to feed the unfortunate offspring of their union, they once more betook themselves to the country. This is a part of Sicily which is literally uninhabited; I therefore very naturally inquired what they lived upon in that forlorn-looking place? this question unfortunately touched upon a tender string, and bursting into a flood of tears, she took a bundle of roots well known in Sicily by the name of *Cardone*, out of her pocket, assuring me that her whole family had tasted no other sustenance for several days! I need hardly add, that the scene was a distressing one, nor would it have required the sensibility of a Sterne to participate in those emotions of sorrow which such circumstances usually excite.

Houses unroofed, bridges broken down, and large towns abandoned, united with immeasurable tracts of waste lands without an inhabitant, are the usual objects which present themselves in all parts; but to describe the sufferings of those who are driven to mendicity in this island, without any resource whatever in their parishes, or the most distant prospect of obtaining employment, is far beyond the power of expression; and while the causes already mentioned must have contributed amaz-

ingly to increase the number of poor, agriculture has been gradually declining all over the island. The effects of a bad harvest were certainly very generally felt in 1801, and thousands fell a victim to absolute famine both in that and the following year; but where was the paternal care of the Sicilian government, while so many valuable subjects were daily perishing in the large cities, and in every part of the island, having no other support but the herbs of the field?' A marked insensibility was manifested on that melancholy occasion, still fresh in the people's remembrance,* whilst, instead of providing any means to relieve a starving population, the taxes were collected with unabated rigor, and the old system of political intrigue closely pursued, at the moment that Sicily was losing her chief and only source of national wealth. The timely aid of a prudent or patriotic legislature, would on that occasion have mitigated the horrors of scarcity, and prevented the subsequent wants of the people, falsely imputed to the severity of the seasons, instead of its real causes, that of unchecked monopoly, the unnatural rights of the barons, and

* A literary friend, alluding to this sad period, expresses himself to this effect: " Nel qual periodo lo rimembro con ispavento, mori di fame infinita di poveri lavoratori, mentre non fuvi chi diede un obolo per prevenire ed arrestare tanti lagrimevoli effetti. Che or si vedono e si vedranno, ed allora vi si poteva ben reparare si vi fusse in Sicilia dramma di amore fraterna."

above all, an unequal and impolitic mode of taxation.

Innumerable other causes might be cited, as having contributed in a subordinate degree to the general ruin; amongst the rest, a constant demand for the cattle hitherto employed in tillage, to supply the English troops; horses for the cavalry, mules for the commissariat and quarter-master-general's department, &c.; the necessity of parting with immense sums of the circulating medium for imported corn at an advanced price, and the consequent inability of farmers to give native industry the smallest encouragement.

Even at this moment, an almost unparalleled scarcity prevails. At no period of its history is Sicily recollected to have been so completely dependant upon strangers for support. It is said that in the course of the present year, nearly a million of dollars have been paid by the people for imported corn; a frightful sum considering how comparatively small the general capital is, yet no reduction has ever taken place; on the contrary, it has increased progressively since September, to the alarming price of twelve ounces the salm, double the price of last year, and about three times as much as it used to be previous to 1800, consequently completely beyond the reach of the body of the people. There is not, however, a native of Sicily who does not maintain most positively that an extensive monopoly exists, and that large quantities of corn are even

forestalled; if severity in a government is ever justified, it is surely on those occasions, upon which the iniquitous avarice of a few individuals induces them to form a combination, the object of which is neither more nor less than to starve the community at large. I mention this, as another year of scarcity may be yet in reserve for the people of Sicily. Upon the tardy and inefficient measures adopted for supplying the approaching wants, and the blind policy of suffering such an exportation of grain last year, I shall at present forbear to remark. Although nearly all the barons have, through their inferior agents, been largely concerned in keeping up a system of monopoly,* some have been more distinguished in it than others; the Prince T——a execrated for his avarice, whilst a minister of state, was one of the greatest corn-factors in Sicily; and, notwithstanding the opinion of a certain party who pretend to applaud his measures, is well known to have made the interests of the community subservient to views of private gain. There was no artifice left unemployed by this nobleman to keep his magazines well stocked: he has frequently speculated on corn before it was cut, by advancing money to the poor farmers, who are in general glad to embrace any offer that may serve to relieve

* At Palermo the sale of provisions is a complete monopoly, and owing to the mal-administration of the senate, confined to about thirty individuals.

their immediate wants; his foreign speculations were carried on with the Turks, Algerines, and Tunisians; the two latter, inveterate and unalterable enemies of Sicily. The Prince has left a son to enjoy his immense fortune accumulated in the above way, who if he does not lay claim to his father's abilities as a dealer, is equally devoted to monopoly and trade. Under so many constitutional evils it is highly ridiculous to hear many who have written upon the state of this island, talk of introducing machinery to facilitate labour, adding to the number of plants already produced, and covering the hills with wood! If any mode of thinking can be compared to that prevalent custom of building castles in the air, it is this, that would divert the public from their real wants to those of an imaginary and useless nature. Give the people a proper stimulus to industry, by which they may entertain even a remote hope of providing for their offspring; and the hitherto unattainable problem of an increased population and improved agriculture, will soon be satisfactorily solved. In the actual situation of affairs, when it would seem that a crisis is approaching which must call forth the latent virtues and utmost energy of those who profess such a regard for the suffering multitude, it would be premature to offer any opinion; but I trust the barons, in whom the power of giving liberty to the people of Sicily is alone vested, will not act with duplicity: they must know that a change, no matter

of what description, must be productive of utility; under the late and present system they have suffered every species of humiliation, and many have been impoverished. It is, therefore, of the greatest possible importance, that while their parliamentary resolutions should be founded on a due regard to the original constitution, the disavowal of their privileges, as ruinous to themselves as the people, does not alone consist in a passive abrogation of feudal rights: to make such declarations beneficial to the public, they must be followed up by a diligent and unreserved execution; and in making any change without first reforming the tribunals, no advantage whatever can accrue to the island; for what is the use of bestowing a favour, however great in itself, if the receiver is totally unable to enjoy it? Such will be inevitably the people of Sicily's case, however much they may be absolved from ancient vassalage, if left in the power of law courts, the members of which are only intent on spoliating the community and promoting a system of endless litigation. This observation, although not immediately connected with the main subject of my letter, has been drawn from me by the many doubts which I have a right to entertain of the sincerity of those who are now most clamorous in favour of a change; the events that will naturally follow an assemblage of parliament can alone justify how far my apprehensions are well grounded.

While the economists of Sicily seem to have

overlooked the real causes of so many years' succeeding scarcity, innumerable works have been written upon the necessity of improvement and reform in the agricultural system. It was also for many years a subject of great controversy, whether it would be more conducive to the public good to permit a free exportation of corn, or restrain it by the continued interference of rigorous laws. The Great Caracciolo, who succeeded to the viceroyalty in 1781, aware of the vital importance of this subject, published a pamphlet, in which he pointed out the necessity of giving unlimited encouragement to exportation, and suggested a variety of propositions that were received by the friends of their country with enthusiastic applause; but more anxious to ameliorate the situation of the peasantry, and thereby contribute to the general prosperity, than to gratify the avaricious views of the barons, his Excellency's plans were warmly opposed by them, yet he had the consolation to witness the good effects of his system while in Sicily; but his sudden recall in 1786, a most unfortunate event for the people, interrupted in some measure the progress of those beneficent regulations which he had established in different parts of the island. His successor, Caramanico, equally revered by the whole population, had formed the determination of effecting a radical reform in those constitutional disabilities, the existence of which must ever be a bar to advancement of any kind; but

he lived at a period by no means favorable to the interests of humanity, and his premature death was, perhaps, one of the most unfortunate events that could have possibly befallen the Sicilians, whose universal sorrow on the occasion proved how truly they appreciated the loss of such a man.* I have already had occasion to say, that amidst a host of viceroys, the above mentioned are the only two who for several centuries have been recognized as the true advocates of the people; the subsequent state of Sicily affords but too much reason to coincide in the justice of this opinion.

Mr. Smith observes, "the freedom of the corn trade is, almost every where, more or less restrained; and, in many countries, is confined by such absurd regulations, as frequently aggravate the unavoidable misfortunes of a dearth, into the

* The generosity of this nobleman was not marked by that ostentation which in the present state of manners so generally accompanies an act of apparent charity. Wrapped up in a cloak he has often left the palace unknown even by his domestics, and frequented to a late hour the abodes of misery and indigence, where his munificence was largely dealt around to the sons of poverty. One evening, while walking in the Flora Gardens, he observed a man seated on a bench, whose appearance denoted a considerable degree of melancholy; going up to him, the prince requested to know why he appeared so dejected, upon which the poor man disclosed his tale of woe; a purse was put into his hand, his address taken, and he was the next day placed in a situation which has ever since enabled him to support a large family of children!

dreadful calamity of a famine." This very just remark is strikingly applicable to Sicily; where, independent of the incessant tyranny of the land-holders, the *Reale Patrimonio*, respective senates, communes, taxes, tythes, want of roads, and, finally, speculations of the court, have, during the last six years, actually realized the foregoing quotation.

It cannot be denied, but that an agricultural society, the construction of cisterns on the high grounds, introduction of machinery, and some idea of the veterinary art, would, if unopposed by such insuperable obstacles as the above, eminently contribute to the national prosperity; but they are, at present, mere secondary considerations.

It would be well for those politicians who are likely to have the means of giving a new stimulus to industry in Sicily, if they were to recollect the fertile qualities of its soil, and the necessity of making a wise distinction between the probable utility of foreign trade and domestic economy. They will, in the pages of our celebrated countryman, find an unerring guide to future wealth. And the sooner a good translation of the Wealth of Nations is introduced into the public schools, the more rapidly will a knowledge of the true sources of national prosperity be disseminated.

Much as remains to be said on the important subject of agriculture, the very able manner in which it has been discussed by other people does not, I fear, justify my having dwelt so very long

upon a matter upon which I do not by any means think myself deeply informed. However, it will not, perhaps, be unacceptable if I insert a small table, extracted from the accounts of the conservator general of finance, shewing the quantity of wheat and barley sown in Sicily during the year 1807, as, by being thus placed upon record, it may serve to mark the state of cultivation at that period, and enable future writers to draw a useful comparison with the past; the calculation is made in salms, each of which rather exceed our quarter.

	Wheat.	*Barley.*	
Val di Mazzara .	141,176	37,646	Salms.
Val di Noto . .	78,540	32,183	
Val Demona . .	41,697	9,111	
Total .	261,413	78,940	

Palermo, May 20, 1807.

To the memorandum from which this was copied, I found annexed the following note, here literally translated from the original Italian:—"Precious document! by which future ages may judge of the degenerated state of Sicilian agriculture. In a million salms of ground (five million acres English), of which this island is composed, no more corn has been sown than the above mentioned quantity! It is now twenty years since I have devoted the utmost attention to this subject, and there does not appear to have been the least alteration in the quantity; we may safely calculate

that, for a period of thirty years, little, if any, variation has taken place; and for ten years, positively, none.

"For ten years the harvests have been uniformly deficient, because, during that time, this ill fated island has been progressively, though with gigantic steps, losing her circulating medium, declining in population, and consequently unable to derive those advantages from agriculture, which a sufficiency of hands and of capital would have produced."

Leaving the people of Sicily to hope for better times, and look back with regret on the more happy times of Hiero II., whose rare felicity it was to have been called the Father of his People, and instruct them with his own precepts, you will, I trust, excuse me for concluding this topic with a few observations on a subject already slightly alluded to; I mean that of mendicity.

In the present state of luxury and refinement, when the principle of self love has been carried so far as to have, in some countries, obliterated those traces of fellow feeling and benevolence which distinguish more savage climes, it is a difficult matter to suggest any opinion in favor of this abandoned class of the community without incurring a charge of considerable presumption, and not unfrequently, of a desire of interrupting the established order of society; yet, considering that I am at this moment in a country, more than a third of whose population is reduced to a state of

absolute beggary;* where no provision whatever is made for nine tenths of them by the legislature; where charity has almost ceased to be thought a virtue; and lastly, where in the very house in which I reside are nightly heard the wailings of the indigent, without food and raiment, or a place to lay their heads, it will not, I should hope, require any very great exertion of sympathy to forgive a few remarks, given with a view of calling the Sicilian government's attention to a subject in which it ought to be most deeply interested.

A great writer upon legislation, whom I have more than once had occasion to quote, has reasoned so very profoundly upon the causes and effects of indigence, and so clearly defined the duty of the public with respect to it, that a reference to his works must be read with peculiar interest by every class of readers.† With his usual

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* As one instance, amongst many others, of the hardships experienced in the baronial towns, I beg to mention the following: the Prince of Palagonia being desirous of building a palace in Palermo, and not in possession of the necessary funds, directed the Guirati of the town from whence his title was derived, to be very strict in exacting the payment of all dues. The consequence was, that many of the poor inhabitants were reduced to the necessity of unroofing their houses, and selling the very tiles for a subsistence!

† Tout ce qu'on peut faire gagner aux pauvres par leur travail n'est pas seulement un profit pour la communauté, mais pour eux-mêmes. Le tems doit être rempli comme la vie doit être soutenue: c'est l'humanité qui prescrit de trouver des occupations pour le sourd, l'aveugle, le muet, l'estropié, l'impotent, l'infirme,

perspicuity, Mr. Bentham divides mendicants into four distinct classes:—1st, industrious poor, who wish to exist by their labour;—2nd, the idle, who prefer a dependence upon casual charity to any exertion of their own industry;—3rd, suspected persons, who, having been accused of some crime, were acquitted for want of sufficient evidence, and consequently remain with a slur on their character, which prevents them from being employed;—4th, criminals who have expiated their crimes in prison, and are once more let loose upon society. In pursuing his argument, Mr. B. very properly observes, that these should be differently treated by the legislature, and kept in separate establishments, for "one bad sheep," he adds, "is quite enough to spoil the whole flock." Now whether, in those countries of Europe in which the arts and sciences of every kind have advanced to a degree of perfection hitherto unknown in the universe, mendicity should be, on any account, tolerated; whether, by the establishment of such laws as are within the reach of all civilized legislators, and their faithful execution, it is not possible entirely to prevent every member of the community from having recourse to alms for his subsistence, are questions which no individual, however experienced, would take the liberty

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Les gages de l'oisiveté ne sont jamais si doux que la récompense de l'industrie. Vide *Traités de Lég.*, vol. ii., p. 59, and vol. iii., p. 45.

of answering; but, in Sicily, any one, who has attentively examined the causes and rapid progress of indigence, is enabled positively to assert, that, of the whole number of mendicants, above three fourths are composed of Mr. Bentham's first class; the hand of charity is not so universally extended here as to offer any inducement to the second; the third, taking advantage of such relaxation in the laws, find ample means of living, and elude justice; while the fourth may be supposed to exist by the commission of new crimes. Is it not, then, a pity, to make use of no harsher term, that thousands of unfortunate beings, precipitated into an abyss of sorrow and distress by the imbecility or imperfection of their government and laws, should be consigned to live upon the herbs of the field by the very people who have caused their misfortunes, in whose power it is to relieve them with so much benefit to themselves, but who prefer a life of indolence, an indulgence in lawless desires, and various other illicit practices, to that of saving those unhappy sufferers who, in this island, yearly fall a sacrifice to penury and want? Upon the religious and moral obligation of those who are in possession of the riches of a country contributing largely to the support of their fellow creatures reduced by causes like the above, it is superfluous to offer a single remark. If there are people who would impose upon the credulity of others, and prefer a life of idleness to one of industry, where are the laws

which should bind them to a sense of propriety? Perhaps the disordered state of morals, which has, unhappily, infected every class of society here, presents insurmountable obstacles to those who affect to wish for a provision being made for the poor! I am sorry to be under the necessity of confessing, that the latter idea has made a very deep impression on my mind; for it is a melancholy fact, that even a certain body, who form so very considerable a portion of the community, whose calling should inspire unbounded benevolence, are said to betray a degree of criminal indifference to this important subject; indeed, a slight examination of the way in which church lands are let,* of the decorations, and expensive mode of life pursued in many of the convents, and of that unpardonable disposition to hoard so generally manifested, gives but too great a colouring of probability to this charge: if the followers of Christ are only to be distinguished by attributes like these, to what purpose did our Divine Redeemer suffer incessant persecution in this world, and at length expire on the cross, after a life of such heaven-born simplicity and virtue? The subject which gave rise to this sentiment is a grave one—I trust the observation is not ill timed.

* The way in which these immense possessions are administered is said to be one of the most serious grievances experienced by the people of Sicily; their leases never exceed three years, and seldom extend so far.

I cannot conclude this highly interesting subject without adding another remark. The nature of my profession has often afforded me an opportunity of passing a part of the week amidst the savages of Africa, and the other on the civilized shores of Sicily: amongst the former mendicity was unknown, every one lived by the fruit of his industry; a very limited number was appropriated to administer the duties of religion, which, however imperfect in other respects, consisted in a plain and unadorned reverence of the Deity; there were no lawyers to defeat the ends of justice, and promote an endless litigation, for the sake of BASE LUCRE; hospitals were unnecessary, for no person became a charge to the public; poor houses were equally so, as all the community were usefully employed, either in cultivating the land, or following a trade; I could see no gaudy equipages, followed by pampered menials, while the proprietors were consigning industrious families to ruin; I saw no theatres, assemblies, or faro tables, spreading moral and political contagion amongst the multitude; it is true, the people were barbarous, in many respects vicious, and, from their ignorance, objects of commiseration: but, when transported to this island, what was the scene continually before my eyes? I blush to repeat it! If you have perused the former part of this exposition, you can yourself answer the interrogatory. It remains for me to put it to your candour and impar-

tiality, whether any person endowed with the power of reflection could witness the striking, the melancholy contrast, without inquiring within himself if the beneficent ends of civilization have not been often frustrated by the crimes and follies of mankind?

From the state of agriculture you are, by a natural gradation, led to inquire into that of arts, manufactures, and commerce, which will form the subject of my next communication.

Since the above remarks on Sicilian agriculture were written, the translation of an excellent work upon Political Economy, by M. Gamille, a French writer of celebrity, has been put into my hands. One passage of it tends so strongly to confirm Mr. Smith's sentiments as to the superiority of freedom over slavery, as they regard public industry, that I cannot help transcribing it.

"The advantages of liberty over slavery, with regard to labour, are no longer a problem in political economy; they have been demonstrated, in the most convincing and satisfactory manner, by the most esteemed writers; and could they do otherwise than promulgate an opinion so honourable, so consoling to humanity, and so fully established by the political and economical history of modern times? The liberation of the people of Europe from slavery has been followed by the clearing and cultivating of lands; by the trans-

formation of huts into cottages, of hamlets into villages, of boroughs into towns, and of towns into cities; by the establishment of manufactures and commerce; by public order, and national power. The nations which first made a brilliant figure on the political stage, are precisely those that first substituted the labour of the freeman for the labour of the slave; and it is only by following their example that others have been enabled to rise to the same prosperity; in short, the æra of the political and economical regeneration of modern Europe, is the æra of the abolition of real and personal slavery."—*An Enquiry, &c.*, p. 146. Here is a forcible lesson for the Barons of Sicily! Will they have the virtue and magnanimity to follow it?

LETTER XIII.

Le premier chapitre du code du Commerce devroit avoir pour objet de montrer la réprocité des intérêts internationaux, de prouver qu'il n'y a point d'immoralité dans le relations de paix, à favoriser l'opulence etrangère, point de merite à la contrarier.—*Théorie des Peines, &c. par Bentham.*

Commerce of Sicily—Resources of the Island—Ancient Trade and Manufactures—British Policy—Observations on the probable Increase of Commerce—Modern Manufactures in Sicily.

Sicily, 1811.

THE commercial system is so thoroughly understood in the British empire, that it would only be subjecting myself to a just charge of presumption, were I to enter into a dissertation upon its incalculable importance, in promoting the prosperity of nations and best interests of civilized society; but I will take the liberty of observing, that, like all other blessings, its value is not always duly appreciated, and that the impolitic laws by which this source of human happiness is regulated very frequently converts it into one of poverty and misfortune; and to add that this has unhappily been the case in Sicily will not be, I am sure, in any manner to exceed the bounds of strict veracity.

In contemplating the amazing resources of this

island, and its admirable geographical position, together with the number of fine harbours with which it is surrounded, one would naturally suppose that Nature had designed Sicily to be the greatest commercial emporium on earth, independent of the glory of having been the first place where agriculture was invented. Notwithstanding so many advantages, they appear to have been comparatively bestowed in vain, since the decline of the Roman empire; nor was the latter period of that nation's power very favourable to commerce; her inordinate ambition, and fatal love of glory, that could only be obtained by the humiliation of inferior rivals, prevented the citizens of Rome, whether under the sway of a consul or an emperor, from devoting a proper share of attention to the more pacific and legitimate sources of national wealth. The epoch at which Sicilian commerce most probably experienced its greatest triumph, was from the establishment of the Phœnicians at Palermo, till Syracuse, Catania, Tauraminium, and Messina, attained that height of opulence by which they were distinguished above all the other Grecian colonies, in the beginning of the first Punic war. From that disastrous period of its history, Sicily was destined to forego the pursuits that had led to her exaltation; and in gratifying the wishes of her invaders, this beautiful island was henceforth to be converted into a scene of blood and carnage, that only ended with the destruction of both her oppressors!

Ruggiero, in addition to his other qualifications as a sovereign, was neither ignorant nor unmindful of the utility of commerce; and although in his time war and conquest were more esteemed, he contrived to introduce the silk-worm into the island from Greece, where it had been propagated for many ages, and even induced a number of artisans from that country to settle here; so that, amongst the many favours conferred on the inhabitants, they are indebted to the above monarch for one of the chief sources of their wealth.

From the reign of Ruggiero to that of the Emperor Frederic, celebrated for his patronage of letters, the commerce of Sicily was not greatly extended; and however much his large domains in the island, or warm attachment to trade, might have interfered with the interests of his subjects, Frederic had the merit of proving to the Sicilians, that an ambition which prompts a sovereign to promote the interests of learning and commerce, is infinitely more laudable than the too prevalent inclination to war and conquest, while his example gave a new impulse to the exertions of those who were before ignorant of the many benefits to be derived from an intercourse with other states. It appears that no efforts were left untried during his life to extend the island's commercial relations; treaties were entered into with the Kings of Barbary and Soldans of Syria, with both of which countries an extensive trade was carried on. Sicilian ships were also employed in the carrying trade between

various parts of the Levant and Spain. Indigo had been very successfully introduced and cultivated, but Sugar formed a most lucrative branch of traffic, having, in consequence of recent improvements, attained a great degree of perfection. Transplanted to Madeira, and thence to the New World, its success soon rendered any future exertion of the Sicilian industry in that article unnecessary; they are, however, said to have imported none till towards the end of the sixteenth century.

I have been thus particular in alluding to the above production, to prove both the mildness and fertility of this climate; nor is it a trifling consolation for the people of Sicily to reflect, that their own island is capable of yielding a commodity that has become a necessary of life, and which other countries of Europe are obliged to procure from regions contaminated with almost incessant disease. If sugar ceased to be an object of general cultivation, it was not so with the silk-worm. The advantages held out, not only to the government, but the people, by persevering in it, surmounted an apparent disinclination to improve so favourable a branch of commerce; and, although frequently interrupted by the impolicy of some viceroys, this manufacture has attained a degree of perfection which amply shows that the Sicilians only require encouragement, to rival the most distinguished efforts of their continental neighbours. It would be little more than a useless waste of

time to dwell upon the state of commerce in Sicily previous to the reign of his present Majesty. The laws which have tended to oppress the people have been equally inimical to commercial enterprize or success; yet many new alliances with great trading countries, particularly France, Venice, and Austria, gave a temporary impulse to the Sicilian merchants prior to the Revolution. At Marseilles, Genoa, and Leghorn, a ready market was always found for their barilla, sulphur, manna, shumac, coral, amber, and various other articles, for which the returns were immediate, and consisted either in money or manufactures. To the Adriatic large quantities of the above named articles, forming the staple commodities of the island, together with salt, that supported a great number of families, were sent, and attended with similar advantages; a considerable trade was also carried on with the Levant; but this being so much exposed to the plunder of pirates and corsairs, was not either so extensive or profitable as the former.

It is not necessary to trouble you with a detailed account of imports, &c., Mr. Jackson's work on the Mediterranean commerce having very fully explained all that can interest or guide the practical merchant in his speculations here.

At a time when the tyrant of Europe has exhausted his utmost efforts to make this island an appendage of the French empire, it might have been naturally supposed that a reciprocal, or rather just hostility would be manifested by the Sicilian go-

vernment. At present I have only to observe, that several articles of French manufacture have been continually imported, and all these with scarcely any exception, of such a description as to interfere directly with the staple commodities of Sicily and our own importations.*

The quarantine laws, as noticed in a former letter, have been also converted into an engine to annoy commerce; and, under the frivolous pretence of preventing the introduction of plague, I have repeatedly seen British ships detained till their cargoes were either spoiled, or no longer wanted in the market, although from ports not subject to quarantine at Malta. These, and innumerable other causes, have made it impossible for the trade of Sicily to sustain itself with any probability of success, and those unavoidable evils produced by the war are aggravated tenfold. Indeed, it is the opinion of many respectable merchants here, that it was fully in the power of this government to avert a great part of the misfortunes which befel surrounding states; and that would most certainly have been effected, if the grievances so loudly complained of at the custom-houses had been redressed, many oppressive imposts taken off, and a due regard paid to the exclusion of French manufactures.

Under the most unfavourable political circum-

* French cloths and silks are much more in use at Palermo than those of any other country; indeed, the island has long been an entrepôt for French and German manufactures.

stances the commerce of Sicily must flourish, if protected and encouraged by the administration of good laws; without these, it will inevitably sink into total decay. If, however, by one of those changes which so very rarely fall to the lot of human nature, a wise and beneficent system of legislation should follow the present degraded state of the island, accompanied by the universally wished-for restoration of a balance of power amongst the European states, calculated to preserve the blessings of peace, then may we expect the halcyon days of Sicily to return; and perhaps, under such a felicitous combination of events, there is no spot on earth that would sooner rise into opulence and splendour than this. The above is probably a visionary speculation; but we usually delight in the anticipation of future happiness, however unlikely or remote its realization may appear.

With respect to Manufactures in this island, although very little can be said in favour of them generally, they deserve a few words. Of the silk which is prepared at Palermo, Messina, and Catania, I have only to add to former observations, that, under every difficulty, it has experienced very great improvement, both as to the mode of spinning and weaving, which exactly resembles that practised in France; while the looms received from England have facilitated the making of several minor articles, particularly shawls, handkerchiefs, and stockings,

which are daily becoming more remarkable for their beauty and delicacy of texture. The embroidered gown patterns, principally made at Catania, are sold very reasonably, and certainly by far exceed any thing of a similar description I have ever seen in other parts of the world. In the preparation of this article of dress, they do not, most assuredly, yield either to England or France.

When a commercial intercourse is established between Sicily, the Levant, and Barbary powers, this important manufacture will imbibe new life, as all the Mahometan states import immense quantities of silk. The returns from Barbary, consisting of cattle, wool, hides, &c., will be a great source of profit here, and very acceptable for many years. The manufactory of cotton and linen carried on for some time at Aci Reale, Leonforte, and Castelbuono, has been extremely unsuccessful; the best specimens I have seen are very coarse. The combing and spinning of flax are not thoroughly understood in Sicily; indeed, the machinery used for both these articles is of the rudest description, and flax is said to be susceptible of considerable improvement in its cultivation. The cotton is of an excellent quality; but, upon the whole, a perseverance in manufactures which can be imported with so much advantage, and infinitely cheaper from without, seems contrary to the true interests of the people, while nearly, if not quite, half the island remains uncultivated.

The woollens made in this island are, if possible, in a state of greater backwardness than the former; and at best only consist of a frieze, not either strong or durable; it is generally converted into clothing for the peasantry. A total inattention to pasturage and rural economy must, for a long time, prevent much improvement in the fleeces of Sicily; nor does this subject appear as yet to have attracted the notice of a single politician or landholder in the island; on the contrary, the breed of sheep, as well as all other animals, is rapidly degenerating. Nothing could be cited as so strong a proof of the general apathy in the way of advancement, as the singular degree of indifference with which this great source of national wealth is treated here. The establisment of a friendly intercourse with Tunis would enable the speculators in this munufacture to conduct it much more advantageously until the native wool is improved.* In a country so full of materials for the purpose, it is curious to reflect, that there is nothing in the shape of porcelain, or crockery-ware, manufactured: the utmost efforts of the Sicilians in this branch of industry, have not exceeded the composition of jars and other utensils, made out of a species of red clay, principally found near Patti, in Val Demona, where a very extensive establishment is formed, that serves not only to supply nearly the whole island, but is enabled to export

* The Merino breed of sheep, however singular the fact may appear, has not as yet been introduced from Spain.

very large quantities to Malta and the coast of Barbary.

In the more refined departments of the mechanical arts, there is no people of Europe more expert than Sicilians. At Palermo, our musical instruments, cutlery, carriages, harness, hats, shoes, and household furniture, are imitated to a wonderful degree of perfection; but if they are sold at one-third of the English price, it should be recollected that their durability is nearly in the same proportion.

Having only attempted to convey a circumscribed sketch of Sicilian commerce, there are a great variety of particulars that might be added to those already noticed, as tending to impede its success, not only amongst the inhabitants but our own countrymen. A total want of confidence in the government; not a single bank in the island where money can be deposited with any advantage; no insurance company or public credit, are primary obstacles to trade, and are most sensibly felt by all parties.* This letter might have been swelled out to a much greater length by introducing some mercantile anecdotes, and more minute accounts of those gentlemen who compose the British factories at Palermo and Messina, but as the partial

* Upon the unfavourable rates of exchange, I have to refer to the account of Malta, where the subject is explained; in perusing that, will be seen the exact state of our mercantile men in Sicily as to money matters.

introduction of a part of these highly respectable bodies might be liable to an uncandid interpretation, and the whole by far exceed the limits of my original design, it will, I hope, be sufficient to observe, that if social harmony and private interest are occasionally interrupted by those little jealousies which seem to be the inseparable failings of our nature, the honor of the British character was never, more generally sustained than by our merchants who are established in Sicily. As in Malta, and our other transmarine possessions, a spirit of unbounded hospitality has always been manifested by them towards strangers, and this is a virtue which should ever receive its just meed of applause. I have already noticed the great impolicy of our diplomatists making such insidious distinctions between those of the mercantile body who ought to sit at their table, while others of the same profession are excluded. The remark is not made with any intention of pointing out to our embassador what company he is to select; this would be going too far: my object is simply to assert, that the possession of a greater capital than his less fortunate neighbour, should not deprive a person of those acts of civility which give him, in a country of this sort, an infinitely larger share of respectability than he would otherwise possess. The object of employing ministers abroad is that of keeping up the national dignity and honor; this cannot be more effectually performed, than by imparting a small proportion of

their splendour to those whose residence in the same country renders it a matter of importance to their success in trade, that they should be honored with the apparent confidence of his Majesty's representative. The force of the preceding observation can only be felt here. Amongst those who have experienced what I have mentioned, they will do do me the justice to acknowledge that the allusion is not insignificant, while, on my part, I have omitted nothing which appeared to me as likely, in any manner, to promote their interest.

In concluding this communication, it may not be inapplicable to observe, that amongst the defects of our diplomatic system there is one which has long operated most seriously against the mercantile interests of British subjects: this is the want of uniting a person to each legation possessing a thorough knowledge of commercial affairs; as the avocations of an embassador seldom enable him to attend to this important part of his mission. If, unfortunately, a military man, he is, by the nature of his profession, often led to attach much less consequence to trade than it deserves. The secretaries of legation that almost invariably accompany our ministers, at least to this part of the world, are by no means deeply initiated in the principles of commercial speculation; their youth and education render the thing next to impossible: upon their other qualifications and private virtues it is unnecessary to expatiate; and I have merely to add, that a sort of commercial secretary

who had resided for some time in the country, and would consequently be better able to decide on the merits of many questions daily occuring at Palermo, if attached to the *corps diplomatique*, must be productive of singularly good effects. It may be answered to the foregoing proposition that our consuls are sufficient to answer every purpose relative to mercantile applications. They certainly would if endowed with more powers and properly supported; but, as in many instances which have taken place, during the last three years in this country, when some have been imprisoned, and others suspended with impunity,* together with various indignities offered to them, how is it possible that they can execute the duties of their office? There are, besides, innumerable difficulties experienced by merchants in this island that absolutely require the embassador's interference, from their affinity to political matters, with which the consul has no business, where an envoy is resident.

As you would probably be gratified to know something of the taxation and revenues of Sicily, I will endeavour in my next to unravel its intricacies to the best of my slender abilities in that way, and as far as I could obtain the necessary documents.

*This will be fully exemplified in the Appendix, No. IV.

LETTER XIII.

The subjects of every state ought to contribute towards the support of the Government, as nearly as possible in proportion to their respective abilities; that is, in proportion to the revenue which they respectively enjoy under the protection of the State. *Wealth of Nations*, Vol. iv., p. 81.

Finance of Sicily—Abuses in Taxation—Amount of Taxes and Resources—Lotteries—Reprehensible Modes of Finance—Civil List—Expenditure—State of the Troops, Marine, and Fortifications.

Sicily, 1811.

AFTER having read my former letters and seen those disorders by which every part of the public administration of the island is contaminated; you will have anticipated that the following attempt to elucidate the extent of revenue, and system of taxation in Sicily, must lead to a disclosure of abuses little inferior to those already noticed. If so, the conjecture has been but too well founded; for whether you consider the mode of levying imposts, their unequal bearing on the body of the people, or final application to the purposes of the State, a more complicated scene of oppression and abuse cannot well be imagined than that exhibited in the fiscal concerns of this country.

However, in a place where the most experienced native politicians and financiers have been

unable to penetrate the numerous mysteries in which many sources of revenue are involved, it has, you will readily believe, been totally out of my power to obtain that degree of information required for a perfect illustration of the subject; but as the end proposed is merely to show what additional evils the people suffer, and how extremely superfluous it has been on our part to subsidize the Sicilian government, you will I am confident readily dispense with unnecessary minutiæ. Indeed when we consider that in modern times finance has been converted into one of the most abstruse sciences, it is no longer to be wondered, that so few people should know any thing about it. I should therefore be sorry to commit myself by pretending to possess much knowledge of a subject that requires talents which are very rarely met with.

Under all the inconveniences of the feudal system by which the people of Sicily were governed previous to the present family's accession to the throne of Naples in 1735, they appear to have had much less cause to murmur against the payment of taxes, than the encroachments on their personal liberties. In fact, the great number of royal domains, subserviency of the barons to military service, and poverty of the vassals, rendered an extensive taxation unnecessary if not impossible, until the increase of commerce and occasional grant of some inconsiderable privilege, threw a little wealth into the middling and

lower classes of society; but when this was perceived, no time seems to have been lost in calling upon them for a proportion of their revenues: and in recollecting that the appeal was always made through those who held the people in bondage, we need not be surprized, that by far the greatest part of the burden fell upon the latter. For these several centuries the parliament of Sicily must be considered rather as an instrument of convenience to the sovereign, than as the guardians of public liberty; a word which in reality they have never understood the meaning of.

In giving an account of the government I endeavoured as well as I could to explain the nature and object of this body, as also the way in which the taxes were levied under the plausible appellation of *donations*, (donativi) in the respective communes which were in their turn subject to the will and pleasure of the deputation of the kingdom and royal patrimony.

There is a table in Mr. Leckie's work, showing the exact sums paid by the people up to the year 1784. A slight view of that document immediately shows the shameful inequality of the public burdens to the above period; but as the limits of his very valuable work did not admit of the subjects being minutely discussed, a number of subsequent facts remain unnoticed. Now as several literary characters in the island have furnished me with a variety of hints relative to additional imposts, and various other sources of revenue,

enjoyed exclusively by the crown, in comparing my view of the subject with that of the above author, a tolerable conception may be formed of the nature and extent of the finances.

As already stated, whenever the parliament was assembled on the first opening, the viceroy proceeded to it in procession, and delivered his address which seldom consisted of any thing more than a recapitulation of pecuniary wants, together with the expression of his reliance on their liberality and wisdom to provide the sums required. This therefore became the primary object of consideration, and the three branches proceeded to devise the best means of yielding to the wishes of their sovereign.*

To enumerate all the particular defects attending the collection of taxes, here, would be to exhaust your patience, but it is necessary that you should be informed of the principal ones, from which it will be no difficult matter to draw satisfactory inferences from the whole. The titles of each impost in the grants, sufficiently explain for what purposes they were designed, but it is scarcely necessary to add how very widely different their application has been towards raising the thirteen ordinary ones. The titled barons are not called upon to pay a single farthing; the ecclesiastical branch pay a sixth

* "The respective donations consisted of the ordinary, and extraordinary; the former being of a permanent nature, while the latter are only resorted to in cases of emergency, not unlike our war taxes but equally lasting. In looking over the

of them with three or four exceptions; a tenth is defrayed by the city of Palermo; and the remainder is raised amongst the demanial, and baronial towns, according to the population. Upon the extraordinary donations the titled barons pay 10,100 ounces only, the rest is levied as above.

The items of revenue which I transmit are

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paper before me, which was drawn up some years ago by an officer attached to the royal patrimony department, I find the ordinary donations to be as follow: viz.

			*Ounces of Sicily.**
No. 1.	Ordinary Impost	*Estab.* 1494.	20,000 *per Ann.*
2.	Fortification Impost	1531	6,666
3.	Galley Impost	1561	20,000
4.	Mill, (Macina) Impost	1564	41,000
5.	Palace Impost.	1567	2,666
6.	Receivers Impost	1570	1,440
7.	Cavalry Impost.	1576	16,000
8.	General Impost	1642	18,000
9.	Do, Do.	1645	26,000
10.	Bridge Impost	1555	3,200
11.	Tower Impost	1579	4,000
12.	Directors Impost	1609	1,145
13.	General Impost	1612	72,712
Total amount of ordinary donations			——231,829
The extraordinary donations still in force are as follow:			
14.	General Impost	1754	32,000
15.	Do, Do.	1754	15,000
16.	Do. Do.	1755	2,000
17.	Road Impost	1778	9,600
18.	Tobacco Impost	1780	102,058
			——160,658
Total produce of ordinary and extraordinary donations			392,487

* Equal to 12*s.* 6*d.* Sterling.

trifling, when compared to others of which I also send you a list.* I am sorry, owing to the

* Besides various local exactions established in all the large cities and towns, the undermentioned are all sources of considerable profit to the Sicilian treasury; and the monies they produce has hitherto been at the entire disposal of the court.*

1st. A tax on flour, (Gabella di fiore) said to exceed 450,000 dollars.

2. Do. on paper, (Gabella de carte) very considerable.

3. Do on Fish, (Gabella de Pesce) no fish can be sold in the markets before a duty is paid!

4. Do. on all articles of provisions brought to market,* (Gabella del R. Corso.)

5. Do. on Tobacco, (Surrogato del Tabacco,) already noticed.

6. General Tax, (Nuovo Imposto.)

7. Do. one per cent. on circulating medium, (Dritto dell' uno per cento,†) this has yielded large sums though frequently evaded and treated with the contempt it deserved

8. Fees paid by all those who get new appointments (Dritto de Mazz' annata) in every department of the state; this is very productive.

9. Fifth, (Il quinto) paid upon all monies awarded by sentences of the courts of justice.—Very lucrative.

10. Duties paid for the use of water, fountains &c. (Acqua della Riggi Corte.)

11. Fees paid on the sale or transfer of estates, (decima e tari,) very lucrative, and notarial proceedings of every description.

12. Fees paid by master notaries, (Impieghi de maestro notaro) very profitable.

13. Fees paid by those who obtain permission of the court to erect mills in any part of the island, (Santo d' acqua.)

14. Out custom house duties in all the ports of the island, (Dogane di Mare &c.,) very productive.

* There are altogether nineteen *Gabelli*, all levied upon the necessaries of life in Sicily.

† This horrible impost is expected to be repealed shortly.

profound secrecy in which all matters relative to the finances are kept, that every effort has been

15. Excise and customs on shore, (Dogane di Terra,) very productive.

16. Duties upon exportation of Corn, (Dritto di estrazione,) extremely productive.

17. Duties paid at all the loading places on the coast, (Caricatori del Regno,) this is also a great source of Revenue.

18. Produce of the Royal Lottery, (Reggio Latto,) the manner of conducting the lottery will be noticed hereafter: it is extremely lucrative.

19. Exaction upon each quintal of oil, (Esazione del tari e sopra d' olio &c.,) very productive.

20. A considerable tax paid by all the convents in the Island, (Orfanotrofio Militare,) for the support of invalids, &c.

21. Fees paid by those who are allowed to bear arms (Dritto Sulle palizu d'armi).

22. Rights paid by all the demanial towns to the crown, (Segrezie del Regno delle Cetta demaniale,) considerable.

23. Funds formerly destined for the support of a prelate, entitled *Archimandrita*, but now in the hands of the royal patrimony (Fondi dell' Archimandrita).

24. Bishopric of Cefalu; left vacant these many years, so as to enable the court to enjoy the benefice &c. (Sede Vacante de Cefalu).

25. Revenues of the bishopric of Mon Reale: which are said to exceed 80,000 dollars per annum, 10,000 of which are only given to the actual bishop, the remainder being sequestered by the court (Amministrazione delle Citta de Mon Reale, &c.).

26. Bishopric of Mazzara; vacant for many years and the revenues appropriated by the court, (Sede Vacante di Mazzara,) considerable.

27. Produce of the abbacy of Sto. Spirito of Callanigetta, (Abbazia di Sto. Spirito, &c.,) very lucrative.

28. Revenues of the inquisition abolished in 1782, and since that period included in the general revenue (Abbolito St. Offizio, &c.).

vainly exerted to procure an account of the sums yielded by each, but, a tolerable idea may be

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29. Abbacy of Ammagione, (Amministrazione dell' Ammagione,) very rich.

30. Do. of Partenico, (Amministrazione di Partenico,) which is very rich; Prince Leopold enjoys a part of this benefice, the rest is taken care of by her Majesty.

31. Do. of Parco, (Amministrizione del Parco,) rich.

32. Various royal Funds (Amministrazione de Molta Fonde Regii).

33. Produce of the estates of the Duke of Ferrandina a Spanish nobleman confiscated for many years by the court, (Dipartimento della Confische Casa de Ferrandina).

34. Confiscated property, estates, and effects, of the house of Monteleone (Casa di Monteleone).

35. Do.—do. of the Grand Constable Colonna (Del Gran Contestabile Colonna).

36. Do. estates and property of the Prince of Soria (Del Principe de Soria).

37. Thirteen fiefs of the Marquis Gattimara a Piedmontese nobleman, who has espoused the cause of Buonaparté (13 feudi del Marchese de Gattimara).

38. Estates of the house of St. Clement (La Casa del duca de Sn. Clemente).

39. Centage paid by notaries, and others in public employments (Fondo de' Lucri).

40. The millione of 1794, a donation voted by the parliament in the above year; for building line of battle ships, and which has continued to be levied annually ever since.

41. The millione of 1798, another donation voted in that year; for restoring the marine, destroyed on the French entering Naples; and still levied.

42. La Bolla, established since the time of the Crusades; is a most productive source of revenue, and will be more fully described hereafter.

formed by the explanations with which various persons in several parts of the island have favored me. It is quite impossible to become thoroughly acquainted with the exact produce of taxes and public property, until the nature of the government is changed; and should the new ministers be permitted to sit in parliament, it is more than probable that no correct account will be ever rendered.

Besides the various taxes or Gabelli, whose amount I transmit you, there are several other sources which bring in very large sums, under the head of confiscated property, but a great deal is omitted, because it has been impossible to procure the necessary information about them; a large share of every prize taken goes to the crown, the droits of admiralty and condemnations that take place in that court, have also contributed to the general

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43. The whole revenue of the county of Modica; comprizing above 85,000 acres of the richest and best cultivated land in Sicily; the yearly sum which this extensive territory brings in to the crown, is at present said not to exceed 96,000 ounces, but many persons assert that if properly administered it would yield much more; the county of Modica has been amongst the confiscated lands for many years: its last possessor was Fitz. James Duke of Berwick, who inherited it from the Duke of Befar. Whether it will ever return into the hands of any future claimants, is very uncertain and even improbable, at least the Court of Sicily will never consent willingly to lose such a valuable acquisition; it is known here under the title of (L' incamerazione della Grandiosa Contea di Modica,) for an account of its fertility, productions, &c., you cannot do better than refer to the Abbate Balsamo's work.

revenue of the crown. Privateers which have been an almost exclusive speculation of the court, and are superintended by Mr. Castrone, a well known character here, must have yielded considerble profits.

I thought it unnecessary to enumerate the different officers, who are intrusted with the administration of the various branches of revenue, of which some are managed by the *Real Patrinonio*, others by the president of one of the courts; some are intrusted to the royal collectors; councellors of state, &c. &c. &c., who are all obliged to account to the minister of Finance, and to his Majesty at the end of every year. I also omitted to mention the parliamentary donations of which there are some paying at this moment, besides a great many that have been voted during these twenty years past. From the concurrent testimony of several persons, both at Palermo and Messina, I am induced to believe that the money raised annually in taxes alone, exceeds 1,500,000 ounces; an immense sum when the value of money in this country is considered, and more than sufficient, one would imagine for the support of a naval and military force, such as that hitherto kept to guard the island.* Amongst innumerable subterfuges

* According to the information communicated to me from a very good authority, it appeared that the whole capital of the Island is estimated at 9,000,000 of ounces; and that those who pay taxes, give at the rate of 17 per cent. on their property.

resorted to, for raising additional supplies, there are a few which deserve to be mentioned more particularly than the rest: the first is that of putting up some crown lands at lottery, and although every advantage has been always taken of that fatal disposition to gamble, so general in the Sicilians, here it was carried to a pitch, I hope unprecedented in any other country. Circulars were sent to the commanding officers of all the regiments, directing that they would themselves take so many shares of the new lottery, and oblige each officer under them, according to their respective ranks, to follow the example; this very equitable arrangement, extended to the serjeants, until the numbers were all disposed of; it should be added, that the circumstance occurred while both officers and men were with very few exceptions, literally serving without any pay.

There is, I believe, no office attended with less satisfaction or more obloquy than that of combating popular prejudices, however absurd they may be; yet it is only by an exposure of their fallacy we can hope to diminish their injurious effects; and, in describing the Sicilian lottery, it would betray a criminal disregard to the interests of humanity were I to omit any expressions of just indignation upon the manner in which it is conducted. The great authority from whom the motto of this letter is taken, observes, "The world neither ever saw, nor ever will see, a perfectly fair lottery."

The lottery schemes, though not circulated with the assiduity used in England, are either written, or printed, and pasted up in each office, giving an account of the intended plan. It is impossible to give you an exact idea of this important part of them; I only know, that the prizes bear no rational or just proportion to the blanks; the highest sum to be gained never exceeds 33,000 dollars, while those who can afford a penny may become candidates, with a remote chance of getting a few shillings. They are held, throughout the year, once a month; there is scarcely a street in Palermo in which you do not see one or more lottery offices; and the crowds of people, many of whom have barely a sufficiency of clothes to cover them, that daily resort to those scenes of legal plunder, prove to what an excess the populace have been deluded as to this fallacious means of gaining a little money. Taking advantage of the universal credulity, a great number of people absolutely live by prognosticating good fortune to those who try their *luck*, as it is called, in the lottery;* these gentlemen are stiled *Polacchi Divinatori*, and are, I understand, sometimes to be found amongst a class of the community whose religious calling

* This is, I suppose, an equivalent to our more *sensible* custom of being guided by dreams, tossing of cups, &c., in lottery speculations; although many a large fortune is said to have been made, even in Sicily, by an occasionally well timed dream.

should dictate a very different line of conduct. The most extraordinary part of the Sicilian lottery remains, however, to be recorded. If you are, contrary to your expectations, and too often, ill-grounded hopes, fortunate enough to get a considerable prize, the utmost difficulty is known to attend its ultimate payment: this was strikingly exemplified a few days ago, when a person whose ticket happened to be drawn a prize of several thousand dollars, elated with his success, and anticipating the immediate receipt of his money, hastened to the office, where the keeper referred him to the minister of finance, here the claim was disputed, on various pretences, and a reference made to some other department, where his application was attended with a similar effect; the poor man must therefore wait patiently the result of his destiny, for as it is a matter in which the court is alone concerned, there is no tribunal to which an appeal lays; indeed, if there was, it would only be supplying the *Paglietti* with a new source of plunder; so that the probabilities are against the man's ever recovering a farthing. A comment on the nature and tendency of such a circumstance might well be considered as needless, if not impertinent.

La Bolla della Santissima Crociata, is another singular means of augmenting the court revenues of Sicily. This is a most productive tax, levied by a bull from the pope, and has existed here since the crusades, from which it takes its name.

It consists in all those who may be so sacrilegiously inclined as to eat butter, cheese, eggs, &c. during Lent, being obliged to address some monk, or the rector of their parish, for *La Bolla*, without which the above violation of their religious tenets is considered as amongst the deadly sins, *un pecato mortale*. The privilege is contained in a small printed paper signed by the bishop, which is sold in every part of the island for a stipulated sum, according to the number of days any one wishes to indulge in what is called the *Latticineo*. The original object of this extraordinary religious impost is said to have been for the purpose of conducting the holy wars, whilst its produce was afterwards to be devoted to the support of a squadron of ships to keep the Mahometan powers in check. The patents are distributed from Palermo to the different parishes and convents throughout Sicily, with instructions to make them as profitable as possible, also to urge every one who can afford it to provide themselves, in time, with the *bolla*, in order to secure an extensive sale of these papers. Several Sicilians have assured me that a commission is paid to those who sell them, which is in proportion to the number sold. The whole of this money has, for some time, been taken by the court.

La Cassa dei Mali abblati, as a source of revenue, is, however, still more extraordinary than the former. At the entrances of every church in Sicily there are little boxes suspended against the

walls, locked up, and having apertures in them for the reception of money, which is sometimes put in from motives of charity, (it having been originally intended to be distributed amongst the poor,) but more often owing to the religious scruples of those who have formerly got any by unlawful means, or wish to compromise with heaven for their sins, the facility of doing which is, of course, impressed on the minds of all devotees and dying persons. The money raised in this truly singular way used, formerly, to be divided amongst the clergy, and laid out in the support of religious ceremonies; but it has, for some time, like the *Santissima Crociata* money, been taken by order of the court.

Independent of large sums borrowed from individuals, numerous and very heavy debts of a private nature, it should be observed, that there is scarcely a public institution in Sicily, particularly those of a charitable nature, to which the court is not more or less indebted for having, on different pretences, alienated a part of their revenues.*

As there is no specified annual income, or civil list, for the royal family, the whole revenue is placed at the disposal of his majesty, although it is both expected and understood by the parlia-

* One of the judges at Palermo being credulous enough, some time ago, to lend a considerable sum to a personage of the first distinction, on the assurance of speedy repayment, has, of course, been disappointed; which circumstance, owing to the weakness of his nerves, has absolutely driven the poor man mad!

ment that the crown lands, confiscations, and various other sources of profit, are infinitely more than sufficient to defray all the expences of the crown, besides leaving a large balance to be carried to the account of the general revenue. It is usual for his Majesty to allot a suitable income to his consort, and all the other members of his family; independent of this annuity, there are always very lucrative offices in the gift of the crown, many of which have been occasionally conferred on the princes of the blood.* This indefinite manner of leaving the revenue of the state to be disposed of between the king and his ministers, without either being in the least accountable to the nation, is, perhaps, one of the greatest constitutional evils in Sicily, and of itself more than sufficient to account for those extensive and incessant defalcations of revenue which take place. The influence of her Sicilian Majesty in appropriating large sums of the public money is another extraordinary fact that ought not to be passed by unnoticed. She having, for several years, been, virtually, the executive head of the government, having all the ministers of her own appointment, it was, of course, natural that the revenues should be at her Majesty's disposal; and while I applaud, in common with others, that unbounded liberality with

* Prince Leopold, in addition to his yearly income, enjoys a part of the emoluments of the abbacy of Partanico, as already noticed.

which she is said to reward her friends and adherents, it is impossible for me not to believe, that there have been many instances of very considerable disbursement, in which the views of some visionary projector have had a much greater share than the interests of Sicily. The sums expended under the heads of Espionage and Secret Service are really immense; the Sicilians themselves have no idea of their amount. Agents kept in all the principal towns, a great many vessels employed to keep up the communication with Calabria and Naples, money sent to the coast of that kingdom, and pensions paid to Neapolitans in this island, not to mention various other expenses, would have exhausted an infinitely larger revenue than that of Sicily; in fact, it cannot, for a moment, be denied, that the utmost profusion has prevailed, and continues to the present moment. I omitted to state, that while his Majesty has lived in retirement at his favorite villa called *La Figuzza*, and seemed to take little or no part in the politics of the day, his authority over every part of the state has remained unimpaired, however relaxed his attention to business, and although, until lately, very rarely exerted; he has also, occasionally, directed the movements of the minister of finance, and other receivers of public property. There has been no period of the Sicilian history at which a plurality of rights (if the expression may be used), was so actively employed to empty the treasury as the present, for the ministers are not only

in the habit of receiving orders from the king and queen, but from the hereditary prince, who has been nominally* placed at the head of the government through the British interest: on the other hand, our embassador cannot be said to have no influence in the general expenditure; but I will venture to say, that while his propositions have the real interests of the island at heart, those which proceed from other quarters have, frequently, objects of a very different nature in view. Thus situated, it is only occupying your time uselessly to dwell any longer upon the state of finance in Sicily. The present minister, Tomasi, is said to possess great talents; but what is the use of talents if unaided by virtue, or that probity of character which makes a man prefer a life of obscurity, to place and power that only lead him into daily breaches of public duty? Incredible are the sums that have been appropriated, I will not say how, during the last three months; nor does it appear that the return of our minister has interfered, in the least, with the squandering system. I could name items of five, eight, and ten thousand ounces, drawn in the course of one week, under the heads of *Guerra e Marina, Conto a Parte, &c.* Should Messrs. Tomasi, Fereri del Bono, and many others, ever hear of this, they will be at no loss to comprehend the meaning of the above allusion; and as it is superfluous to attempt an exposure of facts that

* The English residents here, with very few exceptions, will acknowledge that I have not misapplied this term.

are as clear and notorious as the "sun at noon day," I beg to dismiss this part of my subject.

In addition to his Sicilian Majesty's public establishment, his private emoluments derived from the tunny fishery at the Bagaria and Termini, and farming, have been very considerable. His Majesty's mercantile sagacity has been eminently conspicuous in having associated himself with an industrious monied man, Mr. Mattei, brother to the bishop of Malta, and very deeply in the confidence of all the royal family.

After having enumerated so many sources of revenue, you will, doubtless, inquire, or express your surprise, how it happens; that the Sicilian government should plead constant poverty, and call upon England, not only for a large army and fleet to save the island from the grasp of Buonaparte, but an immense annual sum,* to meet the exigencies of the times. I can easily satisfy your curiosity by asking you another question or two. Is it in the nature of things, that under a system like the foregoing any regard to the principles of equity or economy can be preserved? Are you not convinced, that in a country, the government of which is like that of Sicily, infinite abuse and peculation *must* exist? If the revenues amounted to double what they actually are, is it probable that, considering the present state of the civil and political administration of the island, they would be

* £400,000, according to the last treaty.

found sufficient, in the eyes of the court, to gratify every wish and inordinate desire? I have little doubt but that your answers to these questions will be in perfect unison to those I would give myself. Future inquiry ought to develope the truth, and remove those dark clouds which have obscured the financial concerns of the island for so long a period. When that necessary and desirable period arrives, I have no hesitation in asserting, that if the subsidy is not proved to have been completely thrown away, no one will deny that it has been fatally misapplied. During the whole course of the present momentous struggle, there has not been one Neapolitan regiment that could with propriety or safety be sent into the field to co-operate with British troops, or a single ship fit to keep the sea. These are painful truths to record, but animated by a love of truth, and scrupulous regard to the interests of my own country, I cannot pass over so glaring a circumstance with neglect. Nor can the exposition of facts stop here; why were the garrisons of Messina, Agusta, Syracuse, Trapani, and Milazzo, left to be fortified, at an enormous expense, by the troops of his Britannic Majesty, while those of Sicily did not even supply a working party, and continued in a state of absolute idleness and undisciplined? when neither the minister or commander-in-chief could prevail on the government to assist in a work upon which its very existence depended. On the the other hand, may it not, with equal justice, be asked,

why the poor Sicilian soldiery have been left without pay, cloathing, and rations, while the Neapolitans, Germans, and even Albanese, in the service of his Sicilian Majesty, have never been deficient of those supplies? The consideration of this melancholy subject recalls to my mind scenes of misery and distress which I hoped not to have been under the necessity of obtruding on you again; but how often have I been accosted by the natives of this island, attached to the army, and only distinguished as soldiers by a foraging cap, and thread-bare garment, but in other respects objects of the utmost commiseration; how often, I repeat, have these poor fellows come up to me in the streets of Palermo, Messina, &c., and with tears in their eyes solicited charity? There are few English officers in this island who have not been incessantly called upon to contribute to the wants, and sympathize with the unmerited sufferings, of those martyrs to loyalty and an affectionate attachment to the reigning dynasty.

Will his Excellency Lord Wm. Bentinck, and General Mac Farlane, ever forget the wretched haggard appearance exhibited by the Sicilian regiments marched into the capital from Partenico, Corleone, and Alcamo, in order to their being reviewed by those officers? Those unfortunate men had been, for years, without cloathing, rations, or regular pay; many were without shoes, none had great coats, and the whole looked as if they had been half starved: these are the legions destined

shortly to embark in the glorious cause of Spain! I regret, together with most people here, that they should have been suffered to enter Palermo; as, considering the perturbed state of the public mind, the impressions created by them in that city were neither favorable to our cause, nor that of the court. Leaving this subject to be resumed in another letter, I proceed to close this very imperfect sketch of the revenue.

Without offering an opinion of my own, and altogether guided by the repeated declarations of men of the first talents in Sicily, men who are above all others qualified to judge of its resources, I am justified in saying, that by a prudent, strict, and honourable administration of the fiscal concerns of the island, it possesses ample means within itself of supporting (in alliance with the British nation) the dignity of the crown, and rights of the people, against foreign hostility or invasion; and those without having recourse to the precarious and artificial ones resorted to for the maintenance of public credit in other countries. Should it be deemed expedient to continuethe subsidy,* (a measure the necessity of which is only believed by the followers of the court;) then will the envoy

* There is no part of the British ministry's conduct towards the Sicilian government that continues to excite so much surprize amongst the natives, as that of paying it a subsidy. I am convinced, that if our prime minister was to land at Palermo, and only remain there three days, he would, on his return to England, instantly suppress the grant of a single farthing more.

of his Britannic Majesty be fully authorized in demanding that a faithful account is given of the nett revenues of the state, by which he will immediately be enabled to judge how unnecessary it is to supply money to a country unincumbered with any public debt, and which might even lend some to ourselves, if the assertions of many Sicilian politicians can be relied on. Without vouching for the exact truth of this opinion, the suggestion, if properly made, cannot but be highly interesting to our government, and will, I trust, lead to inquiries of a most beneficial nature, calculated not only to benefit the people of this country, but open the eyes of his Majesty's ministers on the real state of things in Sicily.*

* When the above sketch was finished, it was out of my power to have recourse to Mr. Leckie's excellent account of this island. The impossibility of procuring either that or any other production that militates against existing abuses has been noticed before. It would appear that both our statements have been made from documents, between which the variations are so trifling, that their striking similarity will, I trust, add validity to both, while I can positively assert, that they have come from different quarters. With respect to those parts of the historical survey which relates to Sicily, I am happy to be enabled to state, that a good translation has been made, and only waits the dawn of civil emancipation, to show the people of this unfortunate island in what their true interests consist.

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LETTER XV.

Solon very justly asserted, that the two great stimulants of human action being hope and fear, a good government could not possibly exist without an equitable system of rewards and punishments. This was a wise maxim, equally applicable to the civil and military establishments of every nation.—ROLLIN.

Military Force, &c.—Ancient Warlike State—Proposed Military Policy—Pay—Deficiencies of Allowances—Internal Regulations—Naval Force—Naval Education—Proposed Naval Improvements.

Sicily, 1811.

I DO not think there is any country in Europe where Solon's maxim is so totally diregarded as in Sicily; it must, however, be confessed, that although, amongst the most envied of modern governments, a proper degree of attention to this fundamental rule has ever been wanting, the validity of the Athenian lawgiver's sentiments are by no means diminished, while a reference to the history of past times will afford innumerable proofs of their efficacy when put into execution. However, the immediate object of my troubling you with this letter is, in the first place, to assist you in forming some idea of the island's importance as a naval and military position; in the next, to expose the accumulated hardships experienced by those who

embrace the profession of arms; and lastly, to shew, that, if properly organized, the population of Sicily, circumscribed as it is, can at any time afford a very respectable military establishment for its own defence; for I cannot be induced to believe, that, in the present forlorn state of the Sicilian army, any part of it would be capable of fighting the battles of other people.

While we exult in the glorious epithet of Queen of the Ocean, attributed so frequently to our own country, it cannot well be denied, but that Nature seems to have destined Sicily to be sovereign of the Mediterranean; a title which she has often maintained in former days, and that was only suspended by the ambition and subsequent degeneracy of rival conquerors. From its commanding geographical situation, internal resources, number of strong military positions, and fine harbours, it is no wonder that all the great powers of antiquity should have considered the possession of Sicily necessary to their political existence. In fact, we see that this island was for many ages the arbitress of superiority between Greece, Rome, and Carthage; and that, while in the hands of any one of these powers, they were enabled to give laws to the others, whereas on losing it, their own ruin shortly followed.

The means which Sicily afforded to Pompey the Younger of overpowering his rival, Octavian, although supported by the whole force of Rome;

its influence in enabling Carthage to maintain her naval superiority so long, and final effect in overthrowing that power; together with the discomfiture of so many Grecian expeditions vainly sent against her, are all memorable events in the history of Sicily, and tend to confute the idle suggestions of those who might be induced to impress the British nation with false notions as to the vital importance of our cultivating the friendship and alliance of a people, upon whose co-operation and attachment entirely depend our future power in this part of the world.

The excellence of every military force will, I apprehend, always depend upon three requisites: first, a popular form of government; secondly, wise regulations for its discipline; and, lastly, competent officers. These being established, there is no doubt of all the other concomitants following; should, however, the whole three be wanting, how is it possible to form an army? If, I say, that such has been undeniably the case in Sicily, you will require no further explanation of the causes which have tended to constitute the naval and military force of this island little more than a name. Their invariable discomfiture, and want of success in the field, or on the ocean, are the best proofs of my assertion; but as it is my wish to inform you of what the force of his Sicilian Majesty consists, as well as what it should be, I must beg leave to detail a few more facts, intended to be as laconic as the nature of the subject can admit of. The actual

military establishment of his Sicilian Majesty is as follows:

1. A corps of artillery . . . . . 4 divisions or companies.
2. Train of flying ditto . . . 1 ditto ditto.
3. A corps of engineers . . . merely the officers.
4. Three regiments of cavalry, viz. Val di Noto, Val Demone, and Reale Principe; in all about eight or nine hundred strong.

	Battal.	Strong
5. Infantry, viz. Royal Guards *(Guardia Reale)*	2 —	1,200
Foreign corps *(Esteri ——)*	3 —	3,000
Regiment of Val di Mazzara, native . . .	2 —	1,500
—— Val Demona, ditto	2 —	1,000
—— Val di Noto, ditto	2 —	1,700
—— Sanniti, composed of foreigners	3 —	2,500
—— Real Presidj *	3 —	2,500
—— Albanians	1 —	500
—— Castrone *(Cæciatore del Mare)*	3 —	1,200
Garrison battalion, invalids .	2 —	1,000

By this recapitulation you will perceive, that of the whole force of cavalry and infantry, in all twenty-six battalions, seventeen are composed of foreigners, and only nine of native Sicilians. I ought further to add, that while scarcely any, indeed I believe no natives of this island are allowed to serve either in the character of officers or privates in the foreign corps, the officers of the Sicilians are principally Neapolitans, Germans, Swiss, French, Piedmontese, Venetians, Sardinians, &c.! Upon the marked and decided preference given to the

* Composed of persons who have been convicts in the galleys, &c.

former, whether as to pay, clothing, and other allowances, much might be said: I shall confent myself with merely stating, that it forms one of the most severely felt grievances in Sicily; but it is no more than justice to observe, that, except the king's guards, regiment of Esteri, chiefly Germans and Swiss, and Mr. Castrone's regiment, entirely composed of Neapolitans and Swiss, and raised to forward certain views of the court, the rest of the soldiery have been most deplorably situated; for although, by the original regulations of the army, it was stipulated that their pay, clothing, and rations,* however insufficient, should

* From the following account of the Sicilian soldier's pay and allowances, some judgment may be formed of how far they are equal to satisfy the wants of a man destined to be the guardian of his country's honour and independence. The yearly suit of cloaths allowed by ancient regulation never being regularly given, it is only necessary to observe here, that the pay of each private is three-pence halfpenny per day, of this two-pence is daily stopped, to provide what is called *la menestra*, chiefly composed of peas and other vegetables, together with half a loaf of coarse bread, about fifteen ounces; thus there are only three halfpence a day to provide all the other comforts!—each Saturday one halfpenny is also stopped for necessaries, called *la palizin*. While at Trapani, a few days ago, the soldiers of the regiment of Val di Noto were begging at every house for something to eat; one of them came to the Locanda where I was, and showed about thirty-six beans, which he said was the menestra of that day.

The costume of the Sicilian army is very remarkable, as eminently combining neatness, simplicity, and a regard to economy, which might well be followed in our own country. The long

be punctually paid, such has never been the case; the two first being generally above a twelve-month in arrears, and very frequently much more. Several of the articles, particularly shoes and great coats, have been withheld for four and five years. Of the three regiments of cavalry, two are composed of Sicilians and Neapolitans, together with a few Germans; that of *Principe* are all Neapolitans, officers and men. It has for these three

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coat has been exploded, except with the royal guards and artillery; pantaloons and jackets, like those so wisely adopted in the British army being invariably worn by the infantry. The officers are very rarely distinguished by any thing more than epaulettes, and those are confined to captains and subalterns; all of a higher rank being, like those of Spain and some other countries, known by one, two, or three small gold bands worked round the cuff. The cavalry uniform adopted in this island is still more to be applauded for its extreme elegance, and what the French call *propreté*, consisting of jackets, pantaloons, &c. without the smallest superfluous ornament whatever, either on the officers or men. The former have their pantaloons and jackets embroidered, not with gold and silver lace, but one made of black silk, that, in my opinion, produces a much finer effect than the most costly uniform. The ludicrous custom of wearing mustaches is very prevalent here, but of German origin. There is, perhaps, no regulation of the military profession the utility of which will bear less rational examination than this; for while it militates against cleanliness and convenience, its prevalence for so many years has ceased to give the mustachio any effect of creating terror in an enemy, a virtue formerly ascribed to them, although, I apprehend, without reason. Adam Smith says, "there is no practice or opinion, however absurd, that some philosophers have not supported;" his observation may be, I think, extended with equal justice to nations.

years past fallen to the lot of the Val di Noto regiment to be doing duty with our troops near Messina, and receive additional pay, which circumstance has transformed them into a capital body of men. The regiment of Val di Mazzara is in a very poor condition, but that of Principe, in addition to the colonel's being an excellent officer, is under the immediate patronage of the Hereditary Prince, consequently in tolerably good order; but in justice to Colonel Caracicolo, it never would have been so had he not made the most spirited remonstrances to the court. With respect to the quarters provided for the troops, whether cavalry or infantry, nothing more execrable can well be conceived: those which I have seen in many parts of the island were scarcely fit for the reception of the beasts of the field; many were totally unprovided with beds, and where these were found, they only consisted of some straw and a coarse rug.

The corps of artillery is by far the best in the island, being in a very respectable state of discipline. The officers undergo a very strict examination in the scientific part of their profession before they are admitted to bear a commission; previous to that period they are, like our pupils at Woolwich, called cadets. The same may be said of the engineers; although I think, as to the department of education, the officers of the latter are fully equal to our own, and in many instances infinitely better; in the first place, their studies are more attended to, examinations by far more

rigid, and scarcely any instance has been known of a commission's being granted to any cadet before he has reached the age of twenty-one years. It is singular that even in Sicily there is an important and useful example shown to the greatest nations of Europe.

I must trouble you with a few lines upon the internal regulations of the Sicilian troops, that is, as far as relates to crimes and punishments, not only for the purpose of rendering this description as complete as possible, but to show how widely human institutions differ in almost the same state of refinement and manners. With all that depravity of the national character, which naturally attaches itself to the Sicilian soldier, numerous punishments are less required here than amongst the best troops in Europe. This may be attributed to two causes; first, that parent of crimes, and disgrace to humanity, drunkenness, is very little known; and in the next place, a greater degree of responsibility is imposed on the commissioned officers of each company, vigilantly to watch the conduct of every individual than is customary with other powers. Flogging is unknown, nor does it appear that the introduction of that practice would tend to improve the discipline of his Sicilian Majesty's army; a small piece of bullock's hide, but not applied to the shoulders, is the only instrument of flagellation used; the utmost number of stripes seldom exceed two hundred; but to receive that, the crime must be of a very heinous

the Barbary powers, a flagrant disregard has been shown to the constitutional laws of the island, which provide that so many vessels shall be always equipped to defend the coasts against infidels, for which purpose the tax called *La bolla*, continues to be levied; the manner of appropriating the tower tax has been already noticed. I should not have been thus particular or urgent about the Sicilian navy, if the state of the Island's finances were in such a dilapidated way as to preclude the possibility of re-establishing the marine; or if there were no means presented by the natural resources of Sicily, of supporting it when once established. A great deal of capital timber fit for all naval purposes is to be found about Mount Etna, in the great wood of Caronia, at Troina, Biscari, Cefalu, Corleone, and other places; it is further enacted by an ancient law of the kingdom, that all timber which may be found in any manner fit for the construction of ships, is the exclusive property of the crown, to be marked by a public surveyor, and devoted to that purpose. I have been very careful in ascertaining the nature of Sicilian timber, and find from the written and verbal testimony of many English shipwrights, that it is extremely fine, and fit for building frigates and all other vessels under that class (so profusely, and we may add vainly hath nature poured down her richest blessings in this island); and it remains for me to inform you, tha instead of being applied to naval purposes, it has been converted into a source of pri-

vate speculation, with the exception of a few occasional loads sent to Palermo, to build Pontoons, and repair the ships. There is no attention whatever paid to the forest laws, in themselves said to be extremely defective, and young trees are cut down before their arrival at maturity; in fact the proper culture of them is both unknown and neglected. It is for the future government of Sicily, to judge how far it may be congenial to the people's interests, to correct these matters and seriously turn its attention to the creation of a marine. Should its necessity and importance be as evident to them as it is to others; their eyes will naturally be turned towards Syracuse; the fallen, the degraded Syracuse! The admirable position of that fine port, and extreme facility of communication with the Adriatic and Morea, from whence large quantities of timber might be imported, in exchange for Sicilian produce, point it out as by far the most proper and perhaps only place in the island, where an extensive naval establishment ought to be formed. When I think of this place, as it must have been in the days of its former splendor, exalted to the highest pinnacle of human greatness, and contrast the past with the present, in which the traveller sees nothing save poverty, ruin, and desolation, I cannot avoid expressing my astonishment, that none of the Neapolitan sovereigns ever seem to have been aware of its importance, or capability to reassume any portion of its ancient greatness. While its medals, inscriptions, and other

antiquities, have given rise to innumerable works of learning and interest, I have not seen a line upon the incalculable benefits, which must accrue to Sicily, by its being converted into a naval and commercial station; this is the more extraordinary, as the harbour and surrounding country possess exactly the same attributes, which must have contributed to its original magnificence. Heaven has not surely interdicted the regeneration of cities and states; yet the situation in which this most enviable spot has remained for so many ages, and the apathy of modern times towards its improvement, argue a degree of predestination which a man cannot with propriety encourage. It was to commerce that Syracuse owed its power; is the world so altered, that what occasioned its opulence, two thousand five hundred years ago, could not do the same now? is there any one obstacle to prevent the Sicilian government from raising it to great importance? Palermo, without a port, never can become a great commercial emporium; for an extensive or even very safe naval station, it is altogether unfit: the port of Messina is most difficult of access at all times; when you get in, it is one of the utmost inconvenience; the town and vicinity are continually subject to natural shocks; all these are obstacles to its increased commercial prosperity: at Syracuse none of the foregoing objections prevail, you have the finest harbour that nature could form, affected by no winds, the egress and ingress are attended with sin-

gular facility, there are capital military positions round it, docks are already formed, there is at all times an abundant supply of water, in fact it unites every possible requisite for a large population and extensive trading place; its position with respect to the Levant, has been already noticed. The more I reflect on this subject the more anxious I am to impress its importance on the minds of those in whose power it is to put the preceding hints into prompt and effectual execution; which will I hope excuse the introduction of these remarks, after having said so much before in describing the place.

If like myself you had been in the habit of frequenting Syracuse for several years, and repeatedly sauntered about its ruined temples, amphitheatres, and baths, with a volume of Plutarch's lives in your pocket, you would I am sure make every allowance for that enthusiasm, which I seem to possess about its restoration; if instead of its million and a half of inhabitants and four cities in the days of Hiero, governed by sage laws, you visited this place now, and only saw three or four miserable streets, scarcely 13,000 souls, and these governed by what is ironically called a *senate*, whose days and nights are devoted to the invention of new sources of oppression and annoyance, you would forgive my zeal, and probably join your voice to mine in exclaiming with the indignant poet,

Heavens! when I see this lovely soil,
The tyrant's sport, the bigot's spoil,
Contending furies shake my frame;
Fever'd with rage, revenge, and shame,
I call on mercy's self to fly,
Arm'd with the sword of destiny,
And sweep away the murderous brood!—*

Wearied as we both are by this tedious naval and military inquiry; I shall in my next endeavour to atone for the *ennui*, occasioned by so stale a subject, in offering a few sketches of Sicilian biography to your perusal.

LETTER XVI.

Un titre quel qu'il soit n'est rien, si ceux qui le portent ne sont grands par eux-memes.—ROUSSEAU.

Sicilian Biography—Royal Family—Prince Butera—Princess Leonforte—Prince Paterno—Princess Paterno—Count Caltanissetta—Princes Cassaro and Pantelaria—Princes Belmonte and D'Aci—Villarmosa—Villa Franca—Petrulla—Catolica—Moliterno, &c. &c.

Sicily, 1811.

BIOGRAPHY is justly said to be amongst the most instructive and entertaining studies of mankind. The observation is, doubtless, very properly applied when we speak of Plutarch's Lives,

* Emerald Isle. p. 67.

and other works of that description; but in pourtraying the characters who are the principal actors in this island, I cannot hope to convey any very strong lessons of morality, unless an exposition of errors and weaknesses tends to produce that effect. In these imperfect sketches, you will look in vain for a Timoleon, a Manlius, a Hampden, or a Sidney; there may, indeed, be some individuals in Sicily who are capable of emulating the virtues which immortalized these great men, but I very much fear they will never be found amongst the barons. To say the truth, you are here presented to the acquaintance of a people, who, born to enjoy the hereditary honours and emoluments of their predecessors, have seldom felt the force of M. Rousseau's fine sentiment:—men who, in possessing titles and a fortune, have too often thought those a sufficient apology for the possession of virtue; a quality which, thank Heaven, is infinitely more valuable than either, and in the end, I trust, more profitable. However, in asserting these melancholy truths, great allowance must be made for the gross imperfections of the government, abuses in religion, depravity of the times, and corroding force of example: those are monsters that tend, in every country, to annihilate public morality, and substitute the practice of vice for that of virtue, without which all our boasted civilization is but a curse.

It is not my intention to enter into the privacies of domestic life in Sicily; if I did, a sense of de-

licacy towards all parties would prevent me from painting enormities of vice, the exposure of which does not always improve the cause of virtue. Indeed, I had hesitated with myself, whether it was decorous to add any account of public men here, as in drawing the character of any person, it is almost, if not entirely, impossible to separate his public from his private attributes. Recollecting again, that the people of Sicily have established a most powerful claim on our country, and even still anticipate their deliverance at the hands of his Britannic Majesty, it occured to me that the task I had prescribed to myself, of stating every thing in any manner calculated to show the real state of the island, would not be completed, without some account of those who are principally instrumental in influencing the public happiness or misery. The Sicilian nobility will, it is hoped, find in their hearts to excuse me, if a love for truth has influenced me to record any facts that may tend to militate against their personal feelings, but they may be assured that I have been more solicitous in stating the opinions entertained of them by their own countrymen than by others: if any of them should feel conscious of having offended against their own interests, or those of the state, the era which is said to be opening will afford ample opportunity of renouncing past errors. Should it not be their intention to promote the cause of Sicily, there will then be found very few who are not ready to rejoice at being enabled to

form their own opinions, founded upon those facts which I am about to record, in conformity to the important and valuable privilege accorded to every individual by the British constitution.

A variety of reasons prevent me from including the Royal Family of Sicily in the biographical sketches.* Princes, during their life-time, are justly entitled to a degree of respect and veneration which ought not to be shaken by individuals. The merits of their actions in general are also, by a very proper rule, never decided upon by historians till after their demise: it is then that the fever of faction and partiality subsides, and a due criterion is established, which cannot take place at any other period. Nothing can be more unjust than to observe a contrary course; for when we consider the character of those who are sometimes, by a strange fatality, honoured with the confidence of sovereigns, it is no wonder that they are led into continual errors, and, by the exclusion of sincerity from around their thrones, are

* Mr. Galt, who has favoured the public with a large volume on the Mediterranean, gives a long character of the Sicilian court. Of his Sicilian Majesty he says, "the chief merit of the King is his good-nature, of which he possesses an abundant share: *he is, I think, very popular among the Sicilians!*"— In another part of Mr. G's work, I was not a little surprized to read the following most singular assertion: "The torture for extorting confessions, if not abolished by law, *is certainly not used in Sicily!*"—While such accounts of Sicily are read by the British public, it is no wonder that our countrymen should know so little of the real state of this island.

disabled as it were from acting with justice towards their subjects.

Although I abstain from detailing the events which might serve to assist you in forming some idea of the members of his Sicilian Majesty's family, it will, I apprehend, be proper to state, that Ferdinand the Third of Sicily, but Fourth of Naples, was born on the 12th of January, 1751; and, by the renunciation of his Father, Charles the Third,* King of Spain, succeeded to the crown of Naples and Sicily in 1759. His marriage with Maria Carolina, Archduchess of Austria, born in 1752, the reigning Queen, took place in

* This revered monarch was called to the throne of Spain in 1759, by the death of his eldest brother, Ferdinand VI. The crown of the Two Sicilies devolved to his present Majesty, who was third son of his late father, in consequence of the mental incapacity of the real heir. The renunciation was made with great pomp at Naples, October 6, 1759; and provides that the Two Sicilies and Spain shall never be united under the same sovereign; that the right of inheritance shall descend in the male line until extinct, (his minority ceasing at eighteen,) when the nearest female relative is to succeed. Charles the Third is said to have left Naples amidst the tears and regret of the whole population. In addition to his great patronage of arts, manufactures, and commerce, he had projected a new civil and criminal code for the Two Sicilies, which scheme was unfortunately abandoned by his successor; its execution could not, however, have been difficult while such a man as Filangieri flourished at Naples.

Charles's death took place December 13, 1788; he is represented by all his panegyrists as having possessed those virtues which he recommended to Ferdinand at his renunciation, viz. religion, justice, meekness, vigilance, and an unfeigned love of his people!!!

1768; since which their Majesties have had a numerous progeny, of whom there are only four living, viz. Francis, the Hereditary Prince, born in 1777, and married to his cousin, Maria Isabella, daughter of Charles the Fourth of Spain, by whom he has a male child, two years old, Don Ferdinando, who is of course presumptive heir to the throne;* Leopold, born in 1790; Maria Amelia, born in 1782, and married in 1800 to the Duke of Orleans; Maria Cristina, born in 1779, and married a few years ago to the Hereditary Prince of Sardinia.†

Prince B——a, as the first baron of Sicily, is also by far the richest, having a yearly income which is said to exceed one hundred and eighty thousand dollars. This nobleman is now about sixty years of age, and, always inimical to the fatigue of public life, his time, until within these

* There is no country on earth, except China or Japan, where the royal family is treated with more external respect than in Sicily: in approaching any of the members, the Sicilians fall on one knee, and when a royal carriage passes, every one in the street is obliged to stop and take off his hat. It is extremely farcical in Palermo to see the young son of the Hereditary Prince, little more than two years of age, paraded about in an old open state-coach, where, elevated on a seat in the centre, the poor babe sits like an automaton, insensible of the superfluous adulation of the gaping multitude.

† This is the Hereditary Prince's second wife: he was first married to Maria Clementina, Archduchess of Austria, who died at Naples in 1804, leaving issue three daughters, the eldest of which is now about thirteen years of age.

few years, has been warmly devoted to all those extravagances, whether of gallantry or play, which an immense fortune, and the manners of the day, suggested. It is true the Prince has frequently had military honours conferred on him, but they were merely nominal; nor have his exertions in that hazardous career ever exceeded the inspection of a volunteer corps. There are some strange anecdotes related of his juvenile habits. Once, in fowling upon one of his estates, the sport not being so good as expected, he determined to have a shot at something or other before the day was over. Having wandered about for some time in vain, there was no alternative, except that of returning home without being gratified; it was, however, destined otherwise; for, on proceeding towards the chateau, he perceived a peasant sitting under a copse; the occasion was too auspicious; the Prince therefore, without further ceremony, levelled his piece at the *bird*, and, being a most capital shot, lodged its contents in a part of his body where the wound could only cause a temporary inconvenience. Scarcely had the affrighted countryman time to utter a single groan, when the sportsman put ten ounces into his hand, and departed much delighted at the result of his excursion. The Prince's *penchant* in this way was indulged upon another occasion: one day observing a milk-maid coming over a stile with a pail on her head, she was desired at her peril to stop, and in an instant saw her vessel and its contents on the

ground. The alarm occasioned by this circumstance, strange as it was unexpected, turned out greatly to her advantage, for she was instantly presented with a handsome purse of gold, and permitted to depart.

The command of fifteen votes in the parliament, his large fortune, and being placed at the head of the *Armata Siciliana*, has made it impossible for Prince B——a to avoid entering into the political contentions of the last three years—a most unfortunate circumstance—for, in the first place, it was, I really believe, from necessity, that he took any part in them. The use he has made of his extensive power and patronage is far from being commendable: affecting to be the warm friend of England, his conduct in the affair of the five barons for whose exile he voted, undeceived our government, and ever since that memorable period he seems to have given a decided preference to the measures of the court. I am the more astonished at such a line of politics, as the domination of France in this island must be fatal to all the barons, whose privileges and opulence would be altogether inconsistent with the policy of Buonaparte. The difficulty of penetrating men's actions renders it almost impossible for any person to say what were the motives which could have induced his acquiescence in the late transactions; it might be from a wish of gratifying private resentment; our indecisive policy is said by some to have influenced the Prince's conduct; whatever it was, his contemporaries have marked it with unequivocal dis-

approbation; and I have not the smallest doubt, but that posterity, if they should bestow a thought on his Excellency, will accord perfectly in the present opinion of his countrymen. The Prince has no male issue, although married to a third wife, a Neapolitan lady, who is not destitute of personal charms, and, like the generality of Sicilian princesses, celebrated for her fashionable virtues. The beautiful and accomplished Princess L——e, an only daughter, is heiress to his extensive property. This lady has had a most celebrated career in the annals of Sicilian and Neapolitan gallantry, and was in her younger days called the Venus of Sicily, to which flattering appellation her personal charms are said to have fully entitled her. She has always been followed by a long train of expectant admirers; and, amongst innumerable conquests, more than one British naval character of rank has fallen at the shrine of her beauty. However, it should be added, to the Princess's credit, that, unlike the modern fair of some other countries, she kills with mercy. Her figure is of the most most majestic description imaginable; this, together with a striking and beautiful physiognomy, captivating manners, and the most pleasing affability of demeanour, has made her the envy of one sex, and admiration of the other, here. She was married at an early age to Prince L——e, a nobleman neither remarkable for his talents or virtue: in a union of interest the consequences are not long in developing them-

selves; and, though the marriage was followed by the birth of a daughter, a separation took place soon after; since which the Princess has been one one of the most distinguished votaries of fashion in Sicily; her daughter is married to the young Prince Trabia; and, although not favoured with her mother's charms, she has inherited a great deal of her sensibility. This young lady, though not more than eighteen years of age, is presumptive heiress to four of the largest properties in the island.

Prince Paterno is considerably above sixty, and very infirm, with a much smaller annual rent roll than Butera, and is thought to be a greater monied man. It is generally asserted here, that this nobleman has increased his fortune without showing a very great regard for the interests of his vassals, with whom he is by no means popular; in one instance, during a visit to the town from which he takes his title, the inhabitants were about to testify their indignation at the severity of his agents by using personal violence; but apprized of their design, he escaped precipitately in the night. The love of money has predominated in this Prince to a degree which was once fatal both to his liberty and purse; the relation of it here will, I hope, be a lesson to those who are so very apt to form erroneous notions of economy. Being desirous of passing over to Naples some years ago, he, in order to save a few dollars passage money, embarked on

board a Regusan vessel, which was met with in the vicinity of Naples, and captured by a Tunisian cruizer, and conveyed to Tunis; the Bey soon discovered the value of his captive, and fixed his ransom at several hundred thousand dollars; a large sum was paid by the Prince, and he was suffered to return to this island upon a solemn engagement to remit 300,000 dollars to the Barbarian, as the remainder of his ransom. Having collected the money, and given directions for its payment to the Bey's agents, the temptation was too great for the court, and, strange to relate, his Sicilian Majesty ordered it to be deposited in the treasury, alledging, that being at war with the Tunisians, he could not think of suffering so large a supply of cash to go to his enemies; besides, he wanted money himself, and should employ this in carrying on the war against Barbary with more vigour! This truly singular transaction has widened the breach which had always existed between the Paterno family and the Court, and secured a very powerful party in favor of England.

While L———e has by some been compared to Cleopatra, the Princess P——o, equally conspicuous in the *haut ton* of this country, is thought to partake more of Aspasia's character, although not quite so learned: nor like that celebrated Grecian is she blest with a Pericles. This fascinating woman possesses a large share of good sense, which, blended with considerable personal

beauty and true politeness, makes her society universally courted by those of our countrymen, whether military or naval, who visit Sicily. It is almost needless to add, that Princess P——o is remarkable, above all other Sicilian ladies of rank, for her warm susceptibility of character. There are so many English travellers, noble and plebeian, who can bear testimony to this, that it is quite superfluous to expatiate on it on the present occasion. Having no inclination to wound the feelings of any female, I shall forbear to dwell upon anecdotes and facts which, however they might tend to gratify your curiosity, could not improve your morals; and, in concluding this little sketch, have only to add, that from her abilities and just indignation against a great personage who has long marked her out as a fit object of resentment, she may be eminently useful in promoting our interests in the capital, for in Sicily, as other places, *petticoat interest* is still the best.

Prince P——o has several sons by his former wife; the oldest, Count Caltanissetta, is firmly attached to the court, and said by some to be a decided partizan of France. In a recent instance, the king obliged his father, with whom he is at variance, to alienate a part of his property, 12,000 ounces per annum, in favour of the Count, for the alledged purpose of enabling him to support the dignity of captain of the city of Palermo, conferred on him for his services to the court.

nature indeed. In minor omissions of duty, inattention, uncleanliness, &c., there are, as on several parts of the continent, what are called *chatimens economiques*, a privilege vested in the officers, which I do not find, by inquiry, to be much abused; they consist in a power accorded to each officer of a regiment, in case a soldier of his company is brought before him for any misdemeanour, that, on its being proved, he may order an immediate punishment to be inflicted; a subaltern, for instance, is permitted to confine a man for so many hours, or direct the sergeant to give him from ten to twenty stripes; the captain of a company may order a man above thirty; and so on, in a gradual proportion, to the colonel.

This practice would, doubtless, shock many of our moralists and writers upon military and naval discipline, nor do I mean to offer it as consistent with strict propriety; however, the most experienced officers in Sicily have repeated to me, that they find it generally productive of the most salutary effect, observing, that, when a soldier has, as it were, a certainty of immediate punishment before his eyes, he is often deterred from the commission of smaller crimes; and furthermore, that those severer chastisements which a formal court-martial might feel itself called upon to inflict, are often avoided. To the above it should be added, that while such a discretionary power would never answer in a country where many of the subalterns of a regiment are both too

young and inexperienced to judge of other people's conduct, it is very different here; as there are few ensigns who have not served as volunteers and cadets five or six years before they are intrusted with commissions.

It is remarkable, that in the Sicilian military discipline, so just a notion of the effects of exciting shame should exist: in this respect, giving them a manifest advantage over ourselves. In a soldier nothing is considered so ignominious as being detected in a theft; the punishment of this crime seems to bear a considerable affinity to the Roman *Fustuarium*;* the culprit being brought forward in his full regimentals and arms, a square is formed round him by the regiment, when an officer goes up to him, and, taking away his arms, proceeds to tear the regimentals off his back; in this state he is forced to run round a few drums placed at equal distances on the ground, followed by a party, who annoy him with a small piece of ox-hide, prepared for the occasion: this ceremony, called *La Bacchette*, being ended, he is generally consigned to the civil court, by which he is usually sent to the galleys. It would be difficult to devise any punishment more calculated to annihilate the crime of theft in a regiment than the above; and, to say the truth, the general propriety, and strict regard to obedience, observable in the Sicilian troops,

* Not unlike what is called running the gauntlet on board our ships of war.

considering their innumerable and heavy grievances, are no less object of surprize than admiration to the few of our countrymen who have taken the trouble of examining their real character. Capital punishment is as unfrequent in the military as to the civil law of Sicily: murder and mutiny are, I am told, the only crimes for which a man suffers death.

I now come to the mode of recompense, by no means the least important, of the Sicilian army; but upon the policy or justice of placing so many foreign officers over the native troops, I shall not offer any remark, as upon this you will find no difficulty in forming your own decision. Notwithstanding the increased price of provisions, and every other necessary of life, no material change has ever taken place in the wages of either officers or men, but this inconvenience might be borne, if the scanty pittance allotted them was regularly paid: that this has not been the case for many years is already upon record; the officers are, consequently, with very few exceptions, always in debt, but more frequently without the means of existence. Although the sale of commissions may have in some instances been resorted to, it should be said, in honor to the military institutions of his Sicilian Majesty, that the practice is altogether inconsistent with them: they prescribe on the contrary, that merit and long service are the means which should procure advancement in the military profession; and,

moreover, that family connexions, however powerful, ought not to stop the career of the humblest individual, so that all candidates for the army are first introduced as cadets, and perform their duty in the ranks, till, by the correctness of their conduct, and knowledge of the requisite evolutions, they can be with safety advanced to the rank of an officer: an admirable foundation for creating a formidable army, and worthy of the most enlightened legislator; but how has it been perverted in this island? Those of the natives who had grown grey in the service of their sovereign, have generally been entirely neglected, in many instances displaced, to make room for French, Germans, Swiss, and Neapolitans, but on no one occasion rewarded according to their merits. This is offered to your consideration as a fact, which I call upon any one in Sicily to controvert if he can. I can point out men of the first talents and education in various parts of the island, who have been from twenty to thirty years ensigns and lieutenants! many of them with a large family of children to support. I have the honor of knowing a captain of the engineer corps, and who has served eighteen years in that capacity alone, than whom a more able and ingenious professional character is not to be found in Sicily, who resides in a miserable garret with a wife and seven children, having some months ago been superseded in his command by a Neapolitan, and favorite of the court, lest his known attachment to the English

should betray him into any errors unfavorable to the views of certain persons. In this manner a great many highly meritorious officers have been changed and thrown upon the world within these six months past. The situation of these people is really pitiable, they have no means of communicating with our embassador, and if they had, it is totally out of his power, from the nature of existing circumstances, to render them the smallest assistance; thus are the rules of equity and justice violated, faithful and tried servants of the crown abandoned, and every feeling of humanity scorned.

While I call upon you to sympathize with me in commiserating the unmerited sufferings of the Sicilian army, I cannot be insensible to the unhappy fate of those whose religious opinions and consequent political disabilities, impolitic as they are unjust, have driven them from their own country to seek an asylum in the contaminated regions of another, and under the protection of patrons who, after having worn them out in their service, leave them to languish in obscurity, deprived even of the necessary means of existence! Bound to them by the endearing ties of birth and education, it would be unpardonable in me to omit this occasion of proclaiming to his Sicilian Majesty and the world at large, that he has but ill requited the fidelity and attachment of his *Irish* subjects, many of whom, animated by their characteristic bravery, have bled in his

cause, and frequently moistened the plains of Lombardy with their blood. Considering the nation from whence they came, their unshaken gallantry in the field, and propriety in the camp, it was neither fair nor generous to neglect the whole, and let some remain in the rank of captains of infantry for eight-and-twenty years, and then bury them within the mouldering walls of a convent in Palermo, with only two shillings and sixpence a day to live on. No! this was not the way for a sovereign to reward distinguished merit, while the subjects of France were rising from the ranks of his army to the highest honors in the state; but I trust in God the period is not very remote, when, after proclaiming universal toleration, those veterans will be recalled by the justice and liberality of their own country, and permitted, amongst the scenes of early life, to look back with regret on those years devoted to the service of another, which might have been eminently useful to their legitimate sovereign.*

* It has been my fate to meet with expatriated Irishmen in every part of the world, and while it was impossible to withhold the most heartfelt sympathy for the unnatural causes which have led to their emigration, I confess my national pride has not been a little flattered; for whether in Spain or the islands of the Western Ocean, or in Sicily, they seem to be generally distinguished, both for propriety of character and great talents. A charming production from the pen of Mr. Phillips, and just published, describes most happily the character of his countrymen, and there are, I trust, few of them, no matter in what

Amidst a long list of officers who have the honor of serving under the banner of his Sicilian Majesty, I have not been able to learn of there being a single good general; there may, however, be many, but to know what a man's talents are, it is necessary to place him in a situation wherein they can be usefully exerted. The Prince of Hesse has certainly distinguished himself by great personal bravery on several occasions; and his spirited resistance against the French army at Gaeta, until the severity of his wounds obliged him to retire, bears very honorable testimony to his military character. His appointment to conduct some meditated expeditions on the coast of Naples and Calabria, proves that a high opinion is entertained of the Prince at court; perhaps,

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quarter of the globe, who do not feel the full force of his sentiments, where he says:

Erin, dear by every tie
Which binds us to our infancy;
By weeping memory's fondest claims,
By nature's holiest, highest names,
By the sweet potent spell that twines
The exiles secret hearts around,
By woe and distance faster bound,
When, for his native soil, he pines
As, wafted o'er the clouded deep,
And shuddering at the tempest's roar,
He thinks how sweet its waters sleep
Upon thy lone and lovely shore;
By the indignant patriot's tear
Oh, even by misfortune dear!

1st *Stanza of the Emerald Isle.*

considering the kind of troops destined to accompany him on these enterprizes, it was extremely fortunate for his reputation that they were never attempted to be seriously put into execution.

The famous *Armata Siciliana*, of which so much has been said, may, like our volunteers, be considered little more than an army upon paper: and, although with the greatest deference to the opinions of a writer whom I have hitherto looked up to almost as an oracle, I do not think a standing army the safest instrument that can be used in the defence of a kingdom; yet any thing in the shape of a military force would be preferable to the one above mentioned, resorted to by a most impolitic step of the Sicilian government, as relative to their own safety, for the intrusting arms to a people worn out with such long suffering, and that if a British force had not been on the spot to overawe them, would have most probably led to consequences, which, however favorable to the interests of Sicily, would have certainly proved very fatal to the reigning family. Some say that Prince Catolica was the person who originally suggested the idea of organizing the peasantry in this way: be this as it may, he had a considerable hand in making the arrangements for its ultimate establishment. The object I am informed was to exercise a force of sixty thousand infantry, and several regiments of cavalry, to the use of arms, who, without receiving any pay whatever, were to be ready to march in the event of an invasion;

and a part of the arms were actually delivered, and many thousand individuals put to an immense expense and inconvenience in every part of the island. The cavalry, particularly, was soon put into motion, and however slow the progress of the former was, nearly the stipulated number were tolerably well trained; but what would have been the consequence if an enemy, ever so inconsiderable, had effected a landing in the island? why, I venture to assert, that the *Armata Siciliana* would have instantly joined him, and assisted in liberating the country. When our government, in 1810, made a show of vigor in the diplomatic departments, and while Murat was marching a large army down to the Heights of Meli, opposite Messina, the shattered remains of his Sicilian Majesty's squadron were sent round the coast to disarm the people, and bring the muskets, &c., to Palermo, where they were distributed to Neapolitans, for purposes which will be developed hereafter. The impression made not only on the ill-fated people of Sicily, but all the English in the island, by this most extraordinary proceeding, you may very readily imagine.

Some of the cavalry, which was formed of persons whose finances enabled them to buy their own horses and accoutrements, are still retained; but even the officers have no remuneration from government, and are, without any exception, heartily tired of their military vocation. If the

foregoing observations, relative to this body, tend to illustrate more fully the vaccillating policy of the Sicilian cabinet, a very consoling reflection may be drawn from the facts of so many having been initiated in a limited degree into the military art. As a foundation has been thus laid for an important force, when the nature of the government and changes talked of by the barons, who affect an attachment to our cause, or rather that of their own island, shall take place, it is by such a change that a Sicilian soldier can alone be inspired with personal courage and all those other requisites, without which numbers are literally useless in an army. This observation has been often repeated, and hitherto with little effect, still I thought it as well to add my humble opinion upon a truth which cannot be too deeply impressed on the minds of modern legislators.

Upon the policy and probable utility of sending any part of the native Sicilian troops to the Peninsula, a measure now in contemplation, if not already determined on by our embassador, much might be said, but I shall confine myself to a limited view of the subject. Frederic II., of Prussia, is said to have considered soldiers as mere machines, capable of being moved into action like the winding up of a clock; I beg leave to differ most widely from his Prussian Majesty, thinking it almost an outrage upon human nature, thus to deprive our fellow creatures of those passions and feelings bestowed by

the Divinity for the wisest purposes. It is true, Frederic's opinion continues to be followed up by many sovereigns, in defiance of reason and benevolence; the friends of humanity do not, however, attach the more importance to such an unwise doctrine upon that account: for myself, having always been taught to revere every man, who, abandoning all the more endearing sweets of domestic life, embraces a profession wherein he is continually exposed to hardship and peril for the honor of his country, I am convinced that too great a regard cannot be shown to the feelings and natural inclinations of persons who thus offer themselves up, as it were, at the shrine of national honour and independence; as a general principle, therefore, it appears to be no more than the dictate of common justice in a commander for his own sake, as well as of the persons employed, maturely to consider the motives and sentiments which may be likely to actuate the conduct of those whom he may destine for the execution of a particular service. Applying the observation, to which I anticipate a host of objections, to the people of this island, let me ask with what sort of feelings a native of Sicily can possibly leave his country at a moment like the present, torn as it is by every species of civil contention? Wherever he goes will not the image of his distracted and unhappy country constantly present itself before his eyes? Will not the painful recollection of having left his wife without

any means of existence, his children to starve, and other kindred still subject to the sway of a government like that which I have endeavoured faintly to describe, embitter every moment of his absence? Under the anguish created by such inevitable feelings for his own country, with what animation can he fight the battles of another? I leave the moralist and the soldier to answer these questions, and offer it as my opinion, that if the British government have any intention of breaking the chains which fetter Sicily, the pious work cannot be more effectually executed than by those who have been bred up in sorrow to witness the degradation and misery of their country; that holy office performed, they would go forth like the subjects of our own beloved sovereign, the terror of their enemies, and admiration of other states!

The navy of his Sicilian Majesty has never been remarkable any more than his army, for its excellence. It is evident that the military and naval strength of every country, depend chiefly, if not altogether, on the inducements which are held out to those who embark in these professions; both our own country and that of France, furnish striking examples of this opinion. Not that I mean to compare the soldiers of the latter nation to those of England; I have ever thought them to be infinitely inferior in every respect; upon the comparative merits of our navies the world have long decided. The excessive and unmanly terror

entertained by the naval officers and seamen of Sicily and Naples, of the Barbary powers, is in itself scandalously pusillanimous, and the most unaccountable thing imaginable. In this respect their friends the Portuguese and Spaniards are very little better: but when it is considered that this panic is totally without any just cause, the circumstance becomes more deplorable; nor until some decisive measures are taken to remove it, can the government of this island ever hope to bring the States of Barbary to any reasonable terms, a matter of the utmost consequence to its future interests. For as to depending upon an ally, however powerful, for support, the thought is too precarious and humiliating to be cherished; the universal dread entertained now by all ranks of the Sicilians, arises from the horrible apprehension of slavery on the one hand, and on the other from an habitual idea of their enemy's superiority. One would imagine that the fear inspired by a probability of bondage must animate people to acts of gallantry in their defence; it seems, however, to produce a direct contrary effect; and I cannot help lamenting, that amongst people who like the Sicilians are inveighing against the Mahometan faith, while the superior effect of Christianity on the mind, are incessantly eulogized up to the skies, no efforts should be made by the clergy to inspire the people with a sense of their cowardly fears and debasement in thus yielding to such despicable enemies as the

Tunisians, Algerines, &c. If those troops of popular preachers who are employed in every town in the island were to address the understandings of the people upon this subject, and leave out the usual attack on the passions for very different purposes, it is more than probable that a change would soon be effected in the public mind; at present it is really shocking to see the shameful degree of fear evinced by the Sicilians towards the above mentioned states; a man of war of the largest class has been frequently known to fly from a small chebeque which she might destroy by firing a few shot; and on the coast the appearance of a single corsair throws the whole population into the utmost consternation. Now if it was possible to convince the seamen of his Sicilian Majesty, that in reality there are not more arrant cowards on the earth than the slaves generally employed on board Barbary corsairs, and no persons half so ignorant of the sea life, or further removed from any idea of discipline, I should think the charm which has hitherto operated upon their minds would lose a great part of its force. Following up a disposition in the navy to think less of their enemies, the appointment of experienced officers, and offer of more suitable rewards for future acts of gallantry might lead to the most important results. This subject has pressed so strongly on my mind, that I had almost forgotten to inform you of what the actual naval force of Sicily consists: there is one line of battle ship

no longer in a condition to proceed to sea, six frigates, four of which are rotten, and about six sloops, together with a hundred gun-boats. The number of seamen and marines employed does not exceed twelve hundred; and the services of the navy are exclusively confined to defensive operations, such as carrying dispatches, convoying vessels on the coast, &c., while the offensive is left to a parcel of privateers, which, like those of Malta and Gibraltar, are chiefly manned with French subjects, and literally carry on hostilities against all nations. Not to detain you by a more detailed account of them here, I shall merely add, that the Sicilian privateers are an exact counterpart of the Maltese ones;* and there has, during the present war, been a great number of vessels called scampavias, employed by the court for the purpose of keeping up a communication between this island and the coast of Naples; whilst the perfect organization of these seems to have attracted infinitely more attention than any other parts of the marine.

There was a very excellent naval academy established above twenty years ago, in which several noblemen's sons, and others, used to be prepared for the sea service, but that is no longer in existence; the history of its suppression is briefly as follows: about a year ago, there being an apparent scarcity of money in the Sicilian treasury, without any immediate means of remedying the evil, as every institution both sacred

* To be described in my letters from Malta.

and profane had been exhausted, it was determined on, that henceforth the naval academy should cease to exist, and its revenues allotted to more important purposes; there was, however, no previous notice given to the parents of the scholars, whose dismissal was nearly as abrupt as that of the long parliament by Oliver Cromwell; and taking their satchels on their backs they appeared at the paternal seat like so many outcasts. The dismemberment of this highly necessary establishment, is still a theme of conversation at Palermo, and considered, when related, as a very facetious anecdote.

In speaking of the paucity of military talents, I might have said the same of the navy, in which I know of no person particularly distinguished for the possession of great talents; there are however, many endowed with personal bravery, and it should be observed, that the conduct of the flotilla, employed for some years to co-operate with ours in the straits of Messina, is entitled to the highest praise.

Although, the Sicilians consider their navy as extinct, and certainly not without some reason, the island's position with respect to its old enemies, the Barbarians, renders it absolutely necessary that a respectable squadron should be kept up; indeed the measure of dismantling nearly all the ships, has been one of the most dangerous resorted to latterly, by the government of Sicily; for while it must have amazingly increased the pretensions of

The Duke of San Giovanni, second son of Prince P——, though not in possession of very brilliant talents, nor without his share of vanity, is endowed with a very good heart, which is, perhaps, a better attribute than the former. He is warmly attached to our cause, and has been treated with several marks of attention by our embassador.

Princes Cassaro and Pantelaria, both advanced in life, are supposed to be the ablest statesmen in Sicily; the former, after having filled the first offices here, had the singular and high honor of being appointed *Luogo Tenente*, or lord lieutenant at Naples, on his Sicilian Majesty's first flight from that capital, in 1799, where, notwithstanding his being a native of Sicily, his administration, though short, gave general satisfaction to the people; he has, since that period, been a counsellor of state, and had considerable share in the measures of the court. His political sentiments have been very much obscured lately, owing to the complicated state of parties at Palermo: some assert, that he is favorable to the people; others insinuate a contrary opinion, and observe, that there is no doubt whatever of his disliking our temporizing system, which has determined him to have nothing to do with us; be this as it may, every one acknowledges that he is a man of first rate talents, particularly in the abstruse and difficult art of governing: many of our people call him the Wellesley of Sicily.

Pantelaria, though no longer able to take a

very active part in politics, is looked up to by several of the first families as head of a formidable party, and said to be on very good terms with Butera, Partanna, and Cuto. His talents, as a statesman, were first developed at Naples, where he was appointed a member of the junta, to conduct the affairs of that kingdom after the sovereign's first trip to Sicily. His influence at the court of Palermo, and disposition to bear a part in what is going on, gives Prince P. a great degree of importance in the political circle: he has a large family; one of his sons, Emanuel, is a colonel in the army, and possessed of talents which, united to his patriotism, will, it is hoped, on some future day, make him the ornament of his country.

With the utmost deference to the enlightened author of the Historical Survey, I am almost induced to believe, that he has over-rated the talents of Belmonte, in thinking this nobleman far superior to all the rest in Sicily. It is extremely difficult, in the present state of morals, to judge of political merit: we are no longer living in the days of Cato, or Fabius Maximus; love of country is a secondary consideration with almost every man who enters into public life; the spirit of party and increase of moral depravity are so general, that one hardly knows where to look for a disinterested or virtuous statesman; I do not mean to apply any of these observations to Prince Belmonte, they are, unhappily, too applicable to

every country in Europe. It affords me great pleasure to cite the subject of this short memoir, as a very honorable exception to the generality of his fellow citizens; but if public opinion is the best criterion of merit in a politician, it is but justice to observe, that he is not without his share of censure amongst many of his countrymen. Unqualified praise is but too often known to make people think themselves beyond the want of improvement; it always produces a tendency to this mode of thinking when the object happens to be naturally vain, and who, amongst the great in our days, is without vanity?

Prince Belmonte has done more than the generality of those who read and travel; he has profited by them, and, as Mr. Leckie very justly observes, may be placed on a footing with most European gentlemen. His attention to strangers, particularly to the English, has been much talked of, and deserves, on the score of politeness and hospitality, every praise.* His conduct in so

* In imitation of a prevalent custom in England, there have been several *cabinet* dinners given here lately; and the objects of these were, I understand, principally directed to the discussion of what sort of a constitution the people of Sicily ought to have. Numbers of English were of course always invited, and I understand from one of the guests, that Mr. Secretary ——— and his party, were so well satisfied with the excellence of Prince Belmonte's champain and claret, that they left the constitutional arrangements to the Sicilian part of the company, preferring, like all true Englishmen, the charms of a good glass of wine after dinner, to "the feast of reason and the flow of soul."

spiritedly opposing the unlawful tax of one per cent. was truly meritorious, and led to his exile, which, like his fellow sufferers on that occasion, he should always hail as the most enviable period of his life. His recent exaltation to a seat in the cabinet will afford the Prince an ample opportunity of justifying the high opinion entertained of his patriotism by Mr. Leckie; he has never been employed before in any great public charge: when once a deputy of the roads, several Sicilians have assured me that he became extremely unpopular; it is also asserted, that a considerable tax upon property, which was very warmly opposed by nearly all the other barons, owes its origin to Prince Belmonte: I do not assert these reports as facts, but they are in the mouths of every one at Palermo. He is at present a widower, but it is whispered in the fashionable circle, that an attachment has been formed between him and the amiable Princess of Orleans, sister to the Duke; his former wife, a Parisian of great beauty and accomplishments, died without issue about six years ago. He is said to be worth about 40,000 dollars per annum. I congratulate the Prince most heartily on the merited share of public favor he has acquired, and trust that, directing his future efforts to the benefit of his unfortunate country, he may still live to see the people of Sicily free and happy.

D'Aci, who follows Belmonte in the order of public favor, is, in my humble opinion, entitled

to very great praise for his late conduct. Prejudices naturally attach to a man who for so long a period of his life had been a follower of the court; but where real principle exists, it is found that the interests of one's country is, after all, the only true guide to follow; every allowance should be made for past errors. If this Prince felt under great obligations to his Sicilian Majesty for the numerous advantages, lucrative and honorary, conferred on him formerly, it should be recollected that Ferdinand's person was once saved from captivity by the foresight and activity of this nobleman: for, on the occasion of his Majesty's being so imprudent as to intrust his army to the command of such a man as General Mack, and even accompany him to the walls of Rome, he had very near been surprized by a party of the enemy. D'Aci, at that time his *aid de camp*, apprized of the danger, gave the necessary information time enough to elude their vigilance, by which the king was enabled to return to Naples in safety. On the proposal of the one per cent. tax, although enjoying his sovereign's unlimited confidence, and receiving very large pensions, he had the magnanimity to oppose the tax; this I consider to have been a very great effort of patriotism, and whatever the Sicilians may think of it, I am sure there will be but one opinion entertained of Prince D'Aci's conduct in England, where political merit, if not always duly rewarded, is at

least invariably honored with the deserved meed of national applause.

The Prince is about fifty, is married, and has a large family; the loss of his places, while they were followed by exile, has rendered it necessary for him to live on a very small fortune; but his accession to a seat in the ministry will have the two-fold effect of bettering his circumstances and enabling him to serve his country, the real situation of which he is better acquainted with than any other baron in the island. There is no man in Sicily who has studied the nature of our politics so closely; he is intimately acquainted with all our errors, and, although convinced that by pursuing the present system we shall eventually lose Sicily, he has embarked in the cause, and is willing to be useful if he can. I am justified in adding, that there is not a nobleman in this island that ought to be consulted so soon as to the only means of bettering its condition. It is to the sister of Prince D'Aci, that her Sicilian Majesty is so violently attached, and for whom so much has been done; I regret that this is not the place to enter into a detail of this most singular story.*

Villarmosa has long been distinguished for his rigid economy and unambitious character. From a situation of the greatest embarrassment, in which

* It would do very well for Mr. Goldsmith's late work.

he found the family estates, they have been, during his time, restored to their original value. This nobleman is remarkable for having, on every occasion, disdained the patronage of the court, and its superfluous honours; virtues which have raised him very high in the estimation of his countrymen: it was no wonder, then, that such a man should remonstrate against the one per cent. tax; which circumstance caused his exile, together with the other four barons, in 1811; he bore it with the dignity of conscious virtue, and should his functions as minister of finance be unshackled by the court, unlike those of his predecessor, Tomasi, it is generally thought, that from his great talents in that department of political economy, the most beneficial consequences must result. It ought to be added, in summing up Villarmosa's character, that many Sicilians of respectability look upon him as the only public man in the island who should be intrusted with the situation he actually holds.

Villa Franca is a young man with a competent fortune, limited education, and very slender abilities. It is believed by many, that his entering into the people's cause, which led to his exile, was produced by the mere motive of self-interest, as the monied men were chiefly affected by the tax so often mentioned already. His recantation, contained in a letter to the king, some months before the other barons were released, confirmed the public in their opinion; while it is more than

probable, his reputation has received a wound that will never be healed.

Petrulla is descended from the house of Anjou, and one of the poorest noblemen in Sicily. As if the members of that unfortunate house were destined to be always unhappy, the life of that Prince is said to have been a tissue of unexampled domestic misery; but whatever his motives might have been in opposing the arbitrary measures of the court in 1810, it is but fair to suppose them of a patriotic nature; and although Prince P. may not be endowed with those talents which distinguish Belmonte or Villarmosa, he has the merit of having shared in their sufferings; this circumstance is alluded to, because, in the new arrangements, it does not appear that any provision has been made for him; but there are certainly many persons attached to the present ministry infinitely less deserving of confidence and favour than Prince Petrulla.

Catollica is particularly distinguished in Sicily, not for his political talents, but for having a tolerable idea of military tactics; he is also a very active character. It has been already observed, that the *Armata Siciliana* was altogether planned by Prince C.; people here say, that the project was formed while he was a prisoner at Milan, after the fall of Capua, of which he was governor. A great variety of reports are in circulation in the capital, as to the origin and ostensible design of the above plan; however, as these only rest on hear-say au-

thority, it would be extremely improper to repeat them here. But I ought to add, that the Prince is in high favour at the court; he was lately advanced to the rank of general, and honored with a command. If the public opinion is to be credited, he is by no means favorable to our party; at all events, the terms of intimacy upon which he continues with our enemies, and a very shattered fortune, render Prince C. an object of considerable importance, if not of suspicion.

Moliterne is a most extraordinary character, and still continues to play a very active part in the political theatre of Sicily. The military career of this nobleman has been marked with all those vicissitudes which usually await men of a restless and daring disposition. He first distinguished himself in the war of Lombardy, when the French entered Italy in 1796, as an officer of cavalry; and having lost an eye, returned in triumph to Naples, where he was very graciously received by the queen, and for some time held up as the Bobadil of the day. His revolutionary spirit was, however, soon developed, when an opportunity presented itself. Being proclaimed general in chief by the populace, he got possession of St. Elmo, which he gave up without resistance, and his regiment joined the French on their entry into Naples in 1799; but on their defeat by Cardinal Ruffo he retreated with them, and continued in the service of Buonaparte* for some time, till being either

* The entrance of this general and his marauders into the

suspected or discovered in some political intrigue, not very favourable to the usurper's views, he was obliged to take refuge in England; with his reception there I am entirely unacquainted, but on his return here, to the great astonishment of every one, there was no notice taken of his past conduct; on the contrary, he immediately proposed to organize a corps of royal guides, with which wonders were to be performed in Naples and Calabria;

Neapolitan dominions was marked by all those acts of atrocity which have so justly placed the modern French soldiery on a level with their ancestors the Goths and Vandals. As to Mr. Championet, there was no species of artifice spared, on the one hand, to gain over the swinish and superstitious multitude, whilst on the other, every imaginable act of tyranny was practiced on the nobility and monied men. A contribution of several hundred thousand dollars was made every day, and each palace was obliged to receive so many officers, men, and horses, to be supported at their expense. The former conducted their courtezans to their new quarters, and very frequently dispossessed the real owners. They are said to have insisted on being served with five meals a day; and when this was refused, they would mutilate the pictures, ornaments, furniture, &c.: it is also added, that nothing but turkeys and fowls would go down with them. On some occasions they invited their friends, and while a party of grenadiers were regaling themselves in the ground floor, a chef de brigade, with about twenty of his comrades, would be keeping it up in the drawing room. An English soldier, while on service, is, I understand very happy if, when he lays him down to rest, he can have a canteen full of water by his side: at Naples each man insisted on there being a bottle of good Puozzolo wine deposited by the side of his bed, in which princes and princesses had formerly lain. It is to be regretted, that there is no good account of the affairs at Naples in 1799; their exact recital would afford fine specimens of revolutionary warfare.

for this purpose, very large sums were advanced to him, and scarcely was the regiment formed, when its inefficiency, and incoherent principle of organization, appeared so monstrous, that it was immediately disbanded. Since the above period, he has been constantly employed, in some way or another, under the patronage of her Sicilian Majesty; and within the last three months his assiduity in the execution of a certain commission, having for its object views directly hostile to Great Britain, leaves no doubt on the public mind here of Prince Moliterne's readiness to engage in any undertaking, however desperate, or contrary to the existence of good order. "Huic ab adolescentia bella intestina, cædes rapinæ, discordia civilis, grata fuere; ibique juventutem suam exercuit."*

Marquis Tomasi, a great friend of the queen, is thought to be a lawyer and politician of the first talents: he has generally been employed in financial concerns, and succeeded Medici some time ago in that department; the recent change has again removed him. His great unpopularity with the Sicilians arises from many causes; amongst the rest, he is a Neapolitan—is unequivocally devoted to the court—and lastly, said to be favorable to the views of France. If we may believe the Abbate Balsamo, who has made this gentleman the hero of his voyage to Modica, there are

* Bel. Cat.

few men whose *indole* is so amiable as the Marchese Tomasi, "*il Signor Conservadore;*" but a very different idea is entertained of him by the people. He has amassed a large fortune since his arrival here, and, according to the account of some people, bought his marquisate.

The Chevalier Medici, a descendant of that celebrated house, is a Florentine by birth, and infinitely the ablest statesman in her Sicilian Majesty's confidence. His political history, like that of all men of talents, has been exposed to vicissitude and peril; for, while at Naples, he incurred the suspicion of the court, and was even condemned to death, but by a most fortunate coincidence liberated on the entry of the French into Naples, in 1799: here again his life was seriously endangered, being accused by his liberators as unfavorable to the republican cause, and on the point of being sacrificed to the popular fury, when Cardinal Ruffo's unexpected successes snatched the Chevalier, as it were, from the scaffold a second time. On the restoration of tranquillity, and return of the Royal Family to Naples, he justified himself so much to the satisfaction of the court that her Majesty has ever since been one of his warmest admirers, and honored him with unlimited political confidence. His talents as a financier, which are of the first rate order, were amply demonstrated, during several years passed in administering those of Sicily; but they are not confined to calculation alone; he is thought, by the

best judges in this island, to be not only an elegant scholar, and able diplomatist, but deeply versed in the art of government. Anticipating the broils which have since occurred, the Chevalier M. very wisely retired from office last year; but he has now undertaken a private mission to England, for the purpose, it is said, of criminating certain persons here, causing their recall, and justifying the measures of the court: I trust it will require much more ability than even the Chevalier possesses to succeed in any one of these objects. I was almost on the point of attributing Medici's devotion to his present line of politics to necessity, and the fear of his talents finding no encouragement under any other set of ministers than those with whom he acted himself; but a circumstance has come to my knowledge which has induced me to think less favorably of his private virtues. It is a pity that men of great acquirements should so frequently be sullied by the weaknesses of human nature! Speziale, formerly a judge in one of the courts of Palermo, but previously living at Naples, happened to be a principal advocate in the first trial which ended in Medici's condemnation; but was afterwards appointed to superintend the administration of confiscated property, which placed him directly under the Chevalier, as minister of finance; a determination, it is said, was immediately formed by the latter to be revenged on his former enemy: a degree of unpopularity already incurred by Speziale assisted his

wishes, and so virulently did the Chevalier continue to annoy him, that he first contrived to displace him, and by some subsequent injuries has actually driven the man out of his senses. If Medici were a Sicilian, it would be worth our government's notice to make a convert of him; but as an Italian he can never be popular in Sicily, or have the least effect in influencing their opinions: as the people of this island have too much talent amongst themselves to require any foreign aid; they have now been doomed to see strangers put over them for many centuries; all of whom, with very few exceptions, have abused their power; it is, therefore, very natural for them to be disgusted with the appointment of any more.

By a singular fatality attendant on our nature, it scarcely ever happens that an extraordinary tide of prosperity has not the effect of vitiating, instead of improving, the human character. The Marquis of St. Clair is said to be a very honorable exception to the former part of the above remark. He is a native of France, and having gone to Naples at a very early age, under the protection of an inconsiderable shopkeeper, who had been the companion of his youth in a German regiment, of which our hero was a fifer, a Russian lady about the court, struck with his person, made him some very flattering overtures, which were not rejected by young St. Clair. On her leaving the Neapolitan capital, some time after, she recommended her paramour to the queen, upon whose suscepti-

bility he seems to have made a very deep impression, for he was instantly made a captain in the royal guards. St. Clair, overpowered with his unlooked for advancement, and full of diffidence, debated with himself whether, like another Adonis, he should not fly the destiny that awaited him. Scruples like his are, however, seldom of long continuance; and, yielding to the influence of his better stars, he attached himself wholly to the court, in which situation he has ever since continued. Gifted with the characteristic prudence of a Frenchman, the Marquis has appeared, at least, to dislike political intrigue; and as colonel of the guards, which situation he has held for some years, devoted himself to promoting the comforts and discipline of the soldiery, by whom he is universally esteemed. Assuming the manners of Italy, St. Clair has always evinced the most determined *sang froid* when the intervention of more favored rivals may have deprived him of the queen's preference. In a late instance he was indebted to a Captain Aflitto for a voyage to Gibraltar, where he accompanied the young Prince Leopold, on the preposterous and farcical occasion of his being offered to the Spaniards as a regent. The Marquis's acts of benevolence are said to be both numerous and disinterested. In addition to his colonelcy of the guards, he is a brigadier general, and commands the reserve of the Sicilian army; but his military talents have never been tried, except on the parade.

Mr. Brissac is a French emigrant, and Chevalier

of Malta. He served in the army of Condé, and on its dismemberment came to Naples, where he obtained a commission in the regiment of Borgogne, and soon afterwards her Sicilian Majesty's confidence in all political matters. If the favour of princes is not to be relied on, so is that of princesses extremely precarious, and the Chevalier has experienced it; for he forfeited the protection of his patroness to such a degree lately, that a formal request was made to our minister to remove him altogether from Sicily. He had previously ingratiated himself with a naval officer of distinction here; which circumstance is said to have prevented the queen's request from being complied with. A great part of the Sicilian nobility look up to Mr. B. as a sort of political oracle, and he is extremely popular with many. His late schism with the court, although its cause is entirely unknown, makes it difficult to form a correct opinion of his principles. He is on terms of the strictest intimacy with Cassaro, Fitalia, and others of what is called the amphibious party. While on terms with her Majesty, I am told letters were daily exchanged between them. The Chevalier is thought to possess a thorough knowledge of European politics, and is very studious.

It frequently happens in this world, that the most trifling and insignificant qualification causes the advancement of some, while distinguished merit is more often left to languish in poverty, neglect, and obscurity: moralists very gravely tell

you, that such has always been the case, nor can it ever be otherwise: this is, I confess, but a poor consolation for those who are not born with wealth and patronage, although daily experience proves the assertion to be fatally true for the interests of humanity

The Duke of A—i is a memorable instance of the first part of my remark: a passion for fowling and the chase secured for him the esteem and patronage of Ferdinand; not satisfied, however, with all those advantages which the society and friendship of a prince held out to him, he had recourse to means not the most honorable, and, like many others, known how to abuse the confidence of a weak and unsuspecting master. Previous to the second flight from Naples, A—i was appointed head of the police, with unlimited power, and by his excessive tyranny, fully prepared the people for the enemy's reception. Accompanying the royal family to Palermo, he was appointed to command the *Granadiere Reali*, a favorite corps of his Sicilian Majesty. Having brought with him, from Naples, a lady called Flavia, wife to one of his *aides du camp*, her influence, in Sicily soon became much, greater than the most notorious courtezan of modern times; and although bishoprics, commissions, seats on the bench, &c., were disposed of by this lady, it excited no other sensation amongst the Sicilians, than that of temporary surprize; to such a degree of depravity have things arrived in this country. The Duke's

conduct when the barons were exiled, serves to shew his real character, both public and private: anxious to be in possession of some lucrative places held by his rival d'Aci, and also to ruin him effectually, he urged, with the utmost solicitude, that the latter should be included in the proscription; and his success was followed by an investiture of Prince d'Aci's honors and emoluments. A decided partizan of the court, A—i's secretary, was arrested on the late discovery at Messina, his papers seized, and some recent examinations have brought many extraordinary, and almost incredible facts to light. After an incessant negotiation and very extensive correspondence, attended with every effort that could be attempted on the part of our legation, Lord William Bentinck has, at length, succeeded in procuring his Sicilian Majesty's consent to A—i's removal. Many tears are said to have been shed at the cruel separation! But while the public anticipated that this declared enemy of England would be sent to a place of safety, till the war was at an end, lo and behold! he goes to Cagliari; a place constantly in communication with Buonaparté, and where he can do us ten thousand times more injury than if he remained at the Figuzza; to mend the matter, it is determined that Castrone shall accompany him.

The illiberality and unjust prejudices which exclude literary men from holding public situations under the governments which their learning and talents instruct, are as common in Sicily as in all

the other nations of Europe; but, like them, there are solitary instances of poets and essay writers being allowed to bear a part in the administration: carrying on the comparison, it ought to be observed, that these have owed their elevation more often to the part they had previously taken to forward the views of some powerful faction or great personage, than to intrinsic merit, or their fitness for the affairs of office.

Castellintini, Marquis of Gargallo, known in the literary world by his translation of Horace's Odes into tolerably good Italian verse, by a strange combination of circumstances and effect of crown patronage, became minister of war, some time ago, on the removal of Ariolo (who had filled that important situation after being confined ten years in the castle of Trapani for treason).* The marquis has, I understand, acquired her majesty's friendship, for a series of confidential services, performed by him at Syracuse, and other parts of Sicily, for several years past. Of military tactics and operations, he is totally ignorant, and has never been recognized by the Sicilians either as a statesman or politician.

Prince Canosa is a Neapolitan, and chiefly remarkable for his attachment to the court: the most remarkable event of this nobleman's life, was, his appointment to the government of Ponza,

* It is thought superfluous to give a further account of Mr. Ariolo.

an island in the vicinity of Naples; when, owing to his extortions, he was convicted, and sent to the castle of Termini to expiate his crime: while there he contrived to attract the pity of the Queen, in whose service his subsequent fidelity and devotion, prove that he deserved her commiseration.

The count Priolo, eldest son of Prince Villarosa, a nobleman of great virtue, is a man of considerable talents: it is strange that, knowing this man's principles to be very favorable to the Sicilian court's views, our government should not remonstrate and cause his removal from a place, where those talents may be so detrimentally exerted against us, as at Cadiz, where he is minister from the court of Palermo; he owes his appointment, together with very large pecuniary rewards, to her Sicilian majesty, for his general politics and conduct on the one per cent. tax being levied; which is supposed to have led to his subsequent advancement.

Prince Castel Cicala, who succeeded Circello as envoy to our court, is a Neapolitan, and very little known in Sicily; it is reported here, that while so many millions of the public money are uselessly squandered in Sicily, the allowance to foreign embassadors is so limited, that they are obliged to solicit pecuniary assistance from the governments to which they are deputed as ministers: if true, this is a very novel circumstance in the history of modern diplomacy.

Prince Cuto is a native of Sicily, and one of

those, who, but for the possession of riches and a title, would have most probably remained all his life in merited obscurity; he has successively filled the office of a deputy of the Roads, pretor of Palermo, and is now a counsellor of state; his entire devotion to the court, and activity, when called upon, to execute the mandates of her Sicilian majesty, by whom he is warmly patronized, make Prince Cuto an object of some consideration at Palermo.

Marquis Cardillo has been, for some years, president of the grand criminal court; he is a native of Messina, and bearing in mind the existing jealousy between that place and the capital, is said to show a remarkable preference to his own townsmen. The marquis's talents are not beyond mediocrity. A long romantic story is related of his having, a short time since, been the first to apprize our minister of the decapitation and new invented guillotine plot, for the purpose of taking off the principal nobility, and various other projects to be noticed hereafter; this circumstance, whether originating in fear or honesty of principle, has given him a strong claim on the British government, and the people of Sicily.

Although, in attempting to give you some account of literature and learned men here, some of the following names were introduced, I cannot help once more repeating, that the future ministers of our Sovereign, who may have the honour of representing him in this island, cannot be too much

on their guard against the names of Artale, Parisi, Fereri, Leone, Cupani, Troisi, and Pasqualino; they have, for many years, been the faithful ministers of legal oppression, in this devoted island: it is to the present system of jurisprudence, of which those men have been at the head, that the people of Sicily are principally indebted for their present forlorn condition; and I should not have considered my solicitude for their future happiness sufficiently evinced, if they had not been mentioned in the way they so justly merit, a second time. If universal detestation can mark the character of men, then, indeed, have the foregoing little to boast of on the score of religion, morality, or virtue. Artale, whether viewed in the quiet of domestic life, or executing a sanguinary decree, exhibits human nature in that sort of light, which must create horror and disgust in every mind; his conduct at Messina, where he was sent in 1809, for the purpose of punishing some innocent persons, falsely accused of a conspiracy, is well known to the British army; but more particularly to that amiable character and good officer Lord Forbes, who on a representation from a poor woman, with the humanity so peculiar to his character, caused one of the *damusas** to be examined, where, horrible to relate, the remains of her husband were found, starved to death!—the man was innocent, and had been put in there some days before, by order of Artale; where he had been kept

* Vide account of Government.

without sustenance, till, yielding to the common wants of nature, he expired.* I am sorry, very sorry, to record, that the minister of death was permitted to execute his unlawful and diabolical commission in the presence of a British army; nor should I have communicated so painful and melancholy a truth, but that such things may happen again to-morrow, if our influence rests on its present weak footing.

Several of the above names, if not all, are generally supposed, by the Sicilian patriots, to have also borne a very large share in the guillotine scheme, frustrated a short time ago. Those who know them will have very little difficulty in believing the supposition founded on certainty. Troisi is a Neapolitan, and much more distinguished for his peculations than for his legal talents: united with the captain of marine, Napole, it is to this harpy of the law, that all admiralty court causes have been confided; the recent discovery of a deficit in their accounts of 40,000 dollars, proves how conscientiously they have fulfilled that important trust. To recite the various and innumerable acts of injustice which have brought all these people into such a state of popular contempt and indignation, would, by far, exceed my proposed limits, and render the preceding

* See Mr. Leckie's edition of 1810, p. 602 and 3, where the transactions at Messina are more minutely related, and particularly worthy of perusal.

picture (I fear already too deformed) unfit to be seen by our English friends. I shall, therefore, only take the liberty of adding, that while such a combination is suffered to exist against the public happiness, in Sicily, it is quite impossible for things to wear a favourable aspect. In addition to their other traits, they are known to be undeniably in the French interest, and have all made large fortunes.

Of all the means resorted to by a government for the support of its authority or promotion of its views, there is, I believe, none either so dishonourable or eventually half so unprofitable as unlimited Espionage.* In no nation of Europe

* The sentiments of a writer rather esteemed for his reasoning qualities, than religious principles, are recommended to more governments in the Mediterranean than that of Sicily.

" L'usage d'ouvrir les lettres des citoyens, de leur arracher les secrets qu'ils n'ont pas confiés, ne peut être regardé, que comme une violation ouverte de la foi publique ; il est clair encore que cette infamie n'a aucune autre utilité que de fournir un aliment à la curiosité du Prince, ou aux petites passions des ministres, et de donner aux chef des espions les moyens de nuire a qu'il veut aupres du gouvernement. Aucune secret importante ne peut se connaitre par cette voie, parcé que cet Espionage est public, et si l'on confie quelque fois a la poste des réflexions ou des epigrammes, on n'y livre, *ni ses projets, ni ses complots.* Les espions répandus dans les maisons particulières, sont un autre report de la police moderne, aussi *infame et aussi inutile.* On raconte qu'un ministre de Charles II. d'Angleterre, nommé Craig, dedaigne a aucune de ces vils moyens ; que jamais il n'intercepta une lettre, que jamais il n'employe un espion, mais malheureusement, pour l'espece humaine cet example est

has it been carried to such a length as in the two Sicilies. During the last forty years, an army of spies has been literally kept on foot; in fact, the chief honours and rewards which were formerly destined to stimulate merit, and remunerate naval and military exertions, have been conferred on those who distinguished themselves most in the Espionage department. Millions of the public money have been squandered away to support people tainted with the blackest crimes, and who were as ready to betray their credulous employer, as to receive the pay of their iniquitous calling; laity, nobles, lawyers, and above all the clergy have been indiscriminately enrolled: there has not been a village in Sicily exempt from one of those minions, in some, particularly Messina, Catania, Syracuse, Trapani, &c., from five to ten persons, and sometimes more, have been employed by the court to influence the public opinion, circulate false reports, and excite disgust against the English; the names of many of these are well known to the British ministry—their numbers and mode of acting are minutely so. The ingratitude

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unique jusqu'ici, et l'usage contraire proscrit par la raison, par l'équité, par l'honneur, subsiste presque partout; on l'exerce sans remords, et même sans honte; l'opinion flétrit, a la vérité, les espions subalternes, mais elle s'arrête la, et elle ne devoue pas a l'opprobre ceux qui les emploient, et qui calomniant la nation auprès du Prince, osent lui faire croire que ces infames abuses du pouvoir sont des précautions nécessaires."

Marquis d'Argens.

with which many Sicilian and Neapolitan spies have returned the generous conduct of the person who employed them, ought to prove to those who govern, that the best, and indeed only way of supporting the royal authority, is by endeavouring to gain the hearts of the people; all others, without any exception, have always, and ever will, end in disappointment, sorrow, and ruin. Returning to my first intention, from which I have wandered so far, I am to inform you that a person by the name of Castrone, seems to have been the soul which animated the system of Espionage till his removal a short time since, when his friend and former coadjutor at Naples, Ascoli, was dismissed. It was to Castrone that the payment, organization, and direction of the spies, were entrusted; all the vessels appointed to keep up the communication with Naples and Calabria were under him: he organized a corps of Neapolitans who, to use the poet's expression, are admirably calculated for "treasons, stratagems, and broils;" to crown the whole, he has amassed a large fortune by every means which presented themselves. His late conduct, when appointed to accompany Ascoli to Cagliari, shews how little reliance a sovereign ought to place upon people employed in this way, for being on the point of departure and actuated by some unknown motive, he is reported very confidently to have sent his wife to the British minister with a box which contained ample authority for all his actions while in

office. The documents must of course be of a most interesting nature; it is not very likely, however, any more than the other mass of information communicated to our government, that their contents will ever be given to the public. There is no secret of the Sicilian cabinet with which Castrone is not said to be intimately acquainted.

Although a number of distinguished characters might be added to the foregoing sketches, I am led to believe that to swell out a subject of this sort with an account of persons who have passed the greater part of their lives in obscurity and retirement, could not tend much to your amusement, or the general object of my letters; I leave the history of their actions, therefore, to the future *Nepos* of Sicily, where, in better times, their virtues will, it is hoped, serve as an example to those who follow. Amongst the female votaries of fashion in Palermo, the names of Villarosata, Lardaria, Calliscibetta, Partanna, Casteldimirto, Buonfornello, Trabia, San Cataldo, Catollica, Minutulo, and a hundred others, not to mention those of Messina, Catania, and Syracuse, will long continue to perpetuate the Sicilian manners of the present day, and be recollected after their exit from this sublunary scene; not as the inventors of dissipation, but as the victims of a system handed down by the preceding generation, neither calculated to insure their own happiness, nor excite the admiration of strangers. The ladies of

Sicily and all others whose names a sacred duty has induced me to introduce in the course of these communications, will, I trust, give me credit for having drawn a veil over an infinity of facts and occurrences which a more rigid moralist would have deemed it necessary to expose. Living amongst them for some time, and occasionally participating in their follies, they will, it is hoped, believe me when I say, that I am only anxious to promote their felicity by urging their reform. I have undertaken a thankless, perhaps a perilous office; but educated in a country where equal laws and a free government inspire sentiments of freedom, and at an early age brought by professional duties into regions polluted with depravity and ruinous example, the people of which, in order to be better, only want a constitution and candid admonition, I could not patiently witness such fatal scenes without an attempt, however ineffectual, to promote a change no less desirable for the honour of human nature, than it is necessary for the people of Sicily. My personal inconveniences occasioned by this exposition, however multiplied or severe, will never occasion a sigh, should the object it has in view be accomplished; and in concluding this letter, I have only to add that I shall hail a new æra of civil and political morality in this island with the most unfeigned and heartfelt exultation.

LETTER XVII.

Helas! à quoi les rois sont-ils exposés! les plus sages même sont souvent supris; des hommes artificieux et interessés les environnent; les bons se retirent, parce qu'ils ne sont ni empressés ni flatteurs.—FENELON.

Concluding Observations on Recent Historical Facts and Future Policy—Historical Review—Conduct of the Sicilian Government through the Progress of the Revolution—Re-occupation of Naples—Illegal Execution of the Patriots—Progress of the Late and Present War in Sicily, and Calabria—Conduct of the Queen—Arrival of Lord William Bentinck—Recal of the Barons—Intended Conspiracy—Guillotine Prepared—Subsequent Arrangements, &c. &c.—Conclusion of Sicilian Politics.

Sicily, March, 1812.

ON the eve of leaving Sicily, probably for ever, I now proceed to perform the concluding part of that task which I prescribed to myself when I landed at Catania some months ago. Aware of the extreme delicacy, importance, and even difficulty that must attend the following exposition and inquiry, it is proper that in claiming your indulgence I should also begin by assuring you, how conscious I feel of being unable to do that justice to the proposed subject, which its great magnitude requires; confining myself therefore to the

recapitulation of facts, together with those occasional observations excited by the nature of such a discussion, I shall leave you to draw your own inferences, and feel amply gratified if this communication tends in any manner to elucidate the real state of our political relations, with an Island that claims the friendship of Great Britain, no less from motives of sound policy, than the dearest rights of humanity.

To judge correctly of human actions we should invariably examine their causes, as whenever this necessary rule is neglected, it is almost impossible to draw any just conclusion from the conduct either of nations or individuals. *Private* friendships are said to be sometimes the offspring of disinterested generosity, it may be so, but I really believe that between States they always originate in reciprocal feelings of self-interest; and however remote that great impulse of our nature may at first appear, it will on impartial examination be found, with scarcely any exception, to animate sovereigns in their alliances with each other. This preliminary remark is offered because some political reasoners of the present day are very apt to magnify the friendly offices of one nation to another into acts of spontaneous liberality; whereas, they may be easily traced to feelings of self-love or as in many well known instances, to views of inordinate ambition.

When the awful revolution of 1793 burst upon the world threatening ruin to surrounding states,

and exhibiting human nature in all that sanguinary deformity which has so frequently placed our species far beneath the brute creation, it became necessary for those nations of Europe that wished to avoid the annihilation of social order, and subversion of regular government, to unite in one general league against the common enemy of mankind. Indeed the perverted views of the revolutionists were so soon developed, that this measure appeared to present itself as the only means of avoiding the abyss of errors and of crimes into which the infatuated people of France were precipitated. Hence the origin and commencement of those ties of amity which have since bound many sovereigns of very different characters together; when not forced to adopt another course by the necessity of the times, and the arrogance of a tyrant whose accession to power ought to afford to the present and every future generation a most important moral lesson; while it proves the short-sightedness and fatal imbecility of our nature.

If in some countries the spirit of enterprize, and overheated zeal of statesmen exaggerated the approaching contagion, making it the cause of hostility which might have been avoided, or when entered into could produce no salutary effects to the general cause of Europe, as many have suggested, it is for posterity to pronounce the melancholy truth, and lament the weaknesses and infirmities of their forefathers. Yet the want of wisdom or

foresight in a few should not lessen the merit of whole nations, and while the legitimate sovereigns of Europe saw that their future safety depended on unanimity, a corresponding solicitude on the part of their subjects, proved that they as well knew how to estimate the blessings of political order and domestic tranquillity. Upon the wisdom or propriety which dictated the commencement of hostilities between England and France in 1793, this is not the place to inquire; but having on our part taken up the gauntlet with the declared intention of restoring the unfortunate family of Louis the Sixteenth to the throne, as also to sustain the other tottering governments of Europe, our claims on their friendship and co-operation became of the most imperious and sacred nature; amongst the rest, it was natural for those sovereigns so nearly related by ties of consanguinity to the House of Bourbon* to applaud our efforts, and

* The learned author of a celebrated work lately published at Paris, makes the following beautiful and philosophic reflexion upon this ill fated House.—" Cette maison, la plus ancienne de l'Europe, ainsi que la plus puissante et la plus nombreuse, comptant plusieurs siècles d'une illustre existence et d'un bonheur constant, victorieuse de ses enemis ou héritière de ses rivaux, occupant plusieurs trônes et regnant sur les deux hemisphères, comblée de gloire, d'honneurs, et de pouvoir, etoit destinée à donner à la terre, dans la personne de son chef, un grand et terrible example de la fragilité des grandeurs humaines. Un gouffre effroyable s'est ouvert tout-a-coup sous ses pieds, et il s'y est irrésistiblement englouti, lui, son trone, sa puissance, et sa famille. A peine l' imagination peut-elle suivre la rapidité d' une telle

consider his Britannic Majesty as their best safeguard against the coming danger. The declaration of England was, therefore, soon followed by that of Austria, Spain, and Naples; since which ever memorable period, Europe, with very little intermission, has been one continued scene of carnage, rapine, and disaster; at the bare recollection of which humanity sickens, and every feeling of the mind is made to shudder with disgust.

The Spanish government, however well disposed in other respects, was, from internal abuses and its own imbecility, totally unable to cope with the enthusiastic legions of France, and after a series of defeats, obliged in August, 1795, to conclude an inglorious peace with the murderers of Louis. This circumstance, together with the still more extraordinary one of declaring war against England about two months after, were ominous to Great Britain: and while they stamped the whole Spanish administration with that character for treachery, which it sustained till 1808, seemed to shew us what we had to expect in future. Austria, whose exertions, seconded as they were by brave troops and experienced generals, was also forced to yield, though not without

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catastrophe; les effets de la foudre ne sont ni si terribles, ni plus prompts: en un instant tout a disparu; et l' esprit consterné cherche en vain quelques vestiges de tant de grandeurs.—Hommes du monde, grands de la terre, philosophes de toutes les sectes, politiques de tous les pays, lisez et meditez !!!"

Atl s Historique, par Le Sage.

a struggle, which proved that she had entered most heartily into the cause. Naples, although it declared against the Republic in September, 1793, afforded only an inconsiderable and feeble co-operation with Savoy and Austria. Protected by its remoteness from the vengeance of France, the Neapolitan government appeared to smile with indifference at the torrents of blood which other powers were spilling in the contest; nor is it to be wondered at, that when in the field their troops were incessantly beaten, the feelings and wretched situation of his Neapolitan Majesty's troops could not have disposed them for the prosecution of a war said at least to be waged against civil liberty: for though slaves themselves, they admired freedom in others. Like many other continental states, the Revolution did not remind the government of Naples that it wanted a radical reform; disregarding this salutary lesson, and only intent on perpetuating abuses, the old system was closely adhered to. Fully aware of the inefficacy of its attempts to prolong a war with such powerful opponents, and, as I have been frequently informed, anxious to retire from the scene, the King of Naples concluded an armistice with Buonaparte shortly after his defeat of Wurmser, in October, 1796. The various cessations of hostility, and subsequent treaty of Campo Formio, leaving us to carry on the war single handed, in which situation Great Britain acquired such imperishable glory, Naples remained in a state of

the utmost inactivity till towards the close of 1798, when the establishment of a Republican government at Rome, the removal of the Pope, and proximity of the French army, awakened all its former apprehensions; nor could the apparently pacific intentions of the directory, or eloquence of their embassadors, lull his Majesty into security. Vainly confident in his strength, the army was placed on a respectable footing; 30,000 Neapolitan troops, accompanied with a large train of artillery, formed a cordon on the Roman frontier; and continuing to make the most formidable preparations, the brilliant victory of Aboukir, while it shed a new ray of hope on the desponding continental powers, determined his Neapolitan Majesty not to lose the golden opportunity. Impolitic enough to place his army, then amounting to above 70,000 men, under the command of a foreigner, General Mack, since so well known by his disgraceful capitulation at Ulm, and thereby tacitly acknowledging to his subjects that there was not one man amongst them fit to be a commander-in-chief, his Majesty left Naples in November, 1798, and, in company with Mack, at the head of 40,000 men, approached the walls of Rome, where it was planned to attack the right of the French army under Macdonald, and by cutting off his communications with Championet on the left, to place both their corps in the power of the Neapolitan army; having only 16,000 men in all. The project is said to have been very well

conceived, but the result proved how necessary it is for design and execution to go hand in hand. Macdonald with his usual talents, although in the first instance obliged to abandon Rome, foiled all the efforts of his enemies, and by the position he took at Civita-Castellana not only kept the communication with Championet open, but prevented any farther progress on the part of General Mack; in this crisis inactivity was ruin, and animated by such superiority of numbers, as also that vanity which predominates in weak minds, he determined to attack the French general, but, passing the Tiber, was repulsed at Nessi; recrossing that river he was in his turn followed by the enemy, who, after carrying all his posts, entered Rome once more, fought the Neapolitan army at the Gate of St. John of Lateran, defeated them, and nearly took the king prisoner, after which their retreat was compared to a precipitate flight. Championet during this time was not idle on the left, repelling every attack, and, in almost every instance, annihilating those who opposed his progress; he then boldly entered the Neapolitan territory, and, seconded by Macdonald on the right, soon terrified his Majesty into the necessity of soliciting a cessation of hostilities, at the very moment that the French army was nearly reduced to a state of desperation, and was even menaced on all sides by the populace, who had risen *en masse* to drive away the enemy. I should have also observed, that the British government,

ever ready to aid the common cause, and even to co-operate with its most deceitful and imbecile allies, had come forward on this occasion, and by landing a body of Neapolitan troops at Leghorn, made an important diversion in favor of General Mack. It was, under circumstances like the above, when a few days perseverance on the part of the Neapolitan government might have destroyed the French army, that its disgrace was sealed by a most shameful armistice. In more minutely recording these events, the future historian will have to relate, with regret, that the flag ship of a British admiral, so distinguished for his heroism and triumph, happened to be in Naples Bay, and was of course obliged to receive the royal family on board, for the purpose of conveying his Neapolitan Majesty away from his capital, left to become a scene of revolution and anarchy, during which his subjects seemed to vie with the demagogues of 1794, in acts of the most shocking barbarity. It is superfluous to repeat the subsequent events that led to the establishment of a Republic at Naples, they have been related so often that my object will be, I hope, sufficiently fulfilled, by adding that, from the day of his Majesty's leaving Naples, together with his queen and family, in an English man of war, he could not be ignorant that his future preservation depended principally, if not entirely, on the assistance and friendship of our most Gracious Sovereign. Without searching, as I well might, for

any previous cause of gratitude, I am willing to make this the commencement of that attachment and sincerity on his Neapolitan Majesty's part, which the unexampled and almost paternal solicitude of our government, ever since gave it an unequivocal right to expect.

Arriving at Palermo in January, 1799, the fugitive monarch was received with reiterated acclamations by the populace, who of course fully anticipated a reform of those horrible abuses under which they had been groaning for so many centuries. How cruelly did the Sicilians feel disappointed on perceiving that every office under government was immediately bestowed on those Neapolitans who had followed the court; and, instead of making any changes calculated to ameliorate their situation, it appeared as if the royal family came here, aided by the British fleet, to confirm all former evils. The campaign of Suwarrow having ended in the above year by the liberation of Italy from French dominion, it was of course immediately determined to restore the royal authority at Naples, which Macdonald was under the necessity of leaving with very few troops for its defence; yet the spirit of liberty that had been infused into the Neapolitans, stimulated as it was by all the talents of the country, would have easily sustained the Republican form of government, and, at all events, defied every effort of the king's party, had not the known fanaticism of the people been successfully worked upon by

Cardinal Ruffo, who, like another Godfrey of Bouillon, but infinitely more fanatical, appealed to their superstition, and, as Miss Williams and Mr. Belsham observe, "bearing aloft a crucifix in one hand, and brandishing the sword in the other, eternal happiness in a future world, and the spoils of the patriots in the present, were the temptations held out to the superstitious and barbarous Calabrese." The Lazzaroni, that community of miscreants and assassins who had been for so many years tolerated by the Neapolitan government, although a most formidable combination against the public happiness, were called upon, and knowing, as experience has since demonstrated, that the permanent dominion of France would be the signal for their extirpation,* crowded to the Royal Standard, which they were on a recent occasion the very first to abandon. It was with such auxiliaries and the rabble of Cardinal Ruffo, some Russians and Turks, that the squadron of his Britannic Majesty, under the orders of Sir T. Trowbridge, and afterwards of Captain Foote, were destined to co-operate for the restoration of the Neapolitan monarchy; indeed, as the supporters of "*regular government*," we could not well do less; yet, in doing it, we were,

* One of the first measures of Joseph Buonaparte's administration at Naples was that of marching off all the Lazzaroni to join the army, in doing which he rendered a most important service to the people of the whole kingdom.

I hope unconsciously, preparing a political tragedy, the atrocity of which has scarcely been ever equalled in any period of the world. Here it would afford me infinite pleasure if I could silently pass over succeeding events, and leave this part of the Neapolitan history till the royal family's second flight, but truth and justice forbid it, and I am under the sad necessity of going on. The efforts of the gallant Sir T. Trowbridge were, at Civita Vecchia, crowned with every success, and his conduct to those patriots whom he was directed by a superior power to arrest, but whom, with the characteristic humanity of a British officer he saved, will for ever redound to his credit, while the recollection of such an action must increase our regret at his premature and melancholy fate. In the Bay of Naples and its vicinity, the patriots made a desperate stand, though opposed by powerful assailants; in one fortress, *Avigliano*, sooner than surrender to the royal party, they, with a degree of firmness, by no means prevalent in those degenerate days, consigned themselves to a voluntary death; and it being found impracticable to reduce the castles of Uovo and Nuovo, in which the provisional government had retired with their adherents, a solemn capitulation was concluded between them and all the allied commanders, by which they were permitted to proceed to France unmolested. While in the act of fulfilling the above sacred compact, our fleet, under Lord Nelson's com-

mand, arrived June 24, 1799, and although the garrisons were both embarked ready to sail for Toulon, the greatest naval hero that either England or any other country ever produced, was, by an unaccountable fatality, *persuaded* to annul the capitulation! I say persuaded, for I will never be brought to believe, for an instant, that the magnanimous, humane, and enlightened Lord Nelson, would have committed such an act, if the officious and insidious agency of those around him, had not been most improperly exerted. To form a clear and unbiassed judgment of that and succeeding transactions, by which the British character was so dreadfully tarnished, it is absolutely necessary that you should read Miss Williams's celebrated Letters on the French Republic, published in 1801; and a recent pamphlet, intitled, Captain Foote's Vindication, published in 1810; in the first of these productions the fair author paints them in colours not more glaring than they most certainly deserve; and as to Captain Foote, he not only establishes his own character, but confutes his calumniators, the catch-penny biographers of the hero of Trafalgar, in a manner the most ample and satisfactory.*

* With a veneration approaching to enthusiasm for the Epaminondas of modern times, it has given me very sensible pain to have been thus obliged to notice a circumstance that cannot but interfere, in some small degree, with that unblemished praise which a life of such glory merited. There are many particulars

Shortly after the arrival of our fleet, in sight of which the drama had been opened, a frigate was dispatched for the royal family; they came into

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to be cited in extenuation of his lordship's conduct; yet, as these cannot be mentioned without implicating other people, and prolonging a controversy, upon which, as Mr. Harrison very quaintly observes, "the *sober* part of mankind" have long decided, I shall not dwell upon them. The specious and sophisticated manner in which that writer of biography attempts to justify the affair in Naples bay, and his disgusting adulation of the "illustrious triumvirate," by which he so imprudently designates Lord Nelson, Sir William and Lady Hamilton, cannot be too severely reprehended. Such writers do more injury to the persons they would praise than volumes of the most pointed abuse: and how is it possible for any person in England who takes up Mr. H's book, to form any true idea of the character of their Sicilian Majesties, on perusing such ribaldry as this:—"Her ladyship, on these occasions, was eminently successful in conciliating those who had entertained *unjust prejudices* against the Queen:" and was there ever such mockery as the following—"It was indeed very affecting to hear them, and their transports of joy on beholding him are not to be described; every day which their king remained on board did these loyal people continue *to flock out*, crying, '*Father! father!* let us only see your *face*, and we will be satisfied!'—It was *truly pathetic* to hear the *generous creatures*, and to behold the *amiable condescension* of their worthy sovereign." For innumerable specimens of the above sort, see the work itself. In having thus alluded to so important an historical event, it is far from my wishes to deny Lady Hamilton the merit of having rendered our government the most signal services on various occasions, services which deserve a very different return to that which I understand this accomplished lady has experienced in England. Sir William's political and literary talents are too well known to require any illustration or panegyric of mine.

the bay of Naples July 10th, when the scene of death, hitherto in embryo, commenced; and in giving a loose to the most vindictive and ruinous passions of human nature, his Sicilian Majesty's government forfeited, I really believe for ever, the attachment of his Neapolitan subjects. To increase our ignominy on this sanguinary occasion, the very representative of our sovereign and his lady were on the spot, nay, in the ship of the British admiral, and had fortitude enough to witness the sickening spectacle. "Thus," says a Neapolitan, while giving vent to his broken spirit, "thus, the soldiers of Great Britain, the sons of the English nation, the first-born of liberty in Europe, the heirs of so many philosophers, who were the founders of public morality, and of the rights of nations, thus the acknowledged defenders of the principles of freedom throughout the world, found themselves humbled to the condition of becoming satellites of the cruelty of the King of Naples and *Gens d'armes* of his tribunal of blood!—No," adds the indignant patriot, "this great stain will not always remain impressed on the English name—England will, surely, wipe away this vile, this degrading contamination!" Grant, just Heaven that she may! and may there never more be found in our country those who would add to the national criminality, by attempting either to justify or extenuate such unheard-of proceedings; for by such a conduct we might prepare the way for a

repetition of the disastrous scene, instead of blotting out the foul stain for ever.

Tranquillity being once more restored at Naples, and the monarch restored to his throne by the bravery and unremitting exertions of his allies, for I should imagine no person will give all the honour of this event to Cardinal Ruffo, it was again in the power of his Neapolitan Majesty to conciliate his subjects, by those salutary reforms that had been frequently proposed, relative to the abolition of vassalage, corruption of the courts, and various other evils under which the people were suffering. No wish or effort on his part manifested even a desire of acceding to the popular feeling, and almost every day was marked by the proscription of some unhappy individuals, who, in being suspected of cherishing a gleam of liberty, were sure either of exile, or a dungeon which generally ended in their dissolution.

Notwithstanding the increased unpopularity of the government, there was no diminution of friendship on our part, although, by a new combination of virtue and activity, Naples might have acquired a degree of military and naval strength, which would have made her a formidable assistant in the future struggles of the British empire for the emancipation of Europe.

The battle of Marengo having thrown Italy again into the power of Buonaparte, it was apprehended that no time would be lost by him in wreaking his

vengeance on the court of Naples. This was prevented by the interference of the Emperor of Russia, who persuaded the First Consul to conclude a treaty with Naples: this was signed at Florence, March 28, 1801, and a more disgraceful record of perfidy cannot well be conceived.* Soon after this the negotiation with England was opened, which, in October, led to the famous treaty of Amiens. The eleventh article of that memorable document contains a new proof of the British government's attention to the interest of his Neapolitan Majesty.

Wearied with a peace infinitely more harassing and burthensome to the people of England than a state of war, and which, to speak in the language of some of our own statesmen, neither afforded indemnity for the past nor security for the future, we re-commenced the war alone in 1803. In the same year, a body of French troops, under General St. Cyr, entered the Neapolitan territory as a corps of observation. This was dictated to the enemy by a thorough knowledge and experience of that vacillating and doubtful policy of the court of Naples, which had led it,

* Art. III. of this scandalous compact provides, "That all the ports of the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily shall be shut to all ships of war and *merchantmen*, Turkish and *English*, until the conclusion, as well of a definitive peace between the French republic and these two powers, as of the differences which have arisen between England and the powers of the north of Europe, and particularly between Russia and England." The remaining articles are, if possible, still more degrading.

in several former instances, to follow the example of Buonaparte himself, by the infraction of treaties and violation of good faith; indeed, this was the only method of securing its neutrality. As if, however, some unknown circumstances had induced Buonaparte to think better of the court of Naples, or that he wished to employ the corps of St. Cyr in the approaching war with Russia and Austria, a treaty was entered into at Paris, in September, 1805, and ratified in the following month at Portici by his Neapolitan Majesty, which, amongst other things, stipulated that the French troops should withdraw from the kingdom, in return for which, a strict neutrality was to be observed in the ensuing contest by Naples, and every attempt to violate it by the allies, opposed with force of arms; nor were Austrian or emigrant officers to be employed in defending the strong places, and commanding the armies of his Majesty, who also engaged not to suffer any of the allied squadrons to enter his ports. These were certainly very heavy conditions, and such as, it must be confessed, placed the government of Naples in a situation of the most embarrassing perplexity, a situation from which it would have required a wonderful display of talent to extricate itself; for by refusing to treat with France, the sovereign must abandon his capital again; while, on the other hand, in ratifying a treaty with the man who had long been the inveterate enemy of himself and all his benefactors, he justly exposed himself to the

censure of Europe, and deserted a cause in which he was really more deeply interested than any other sovereign. Thus, in compromising personal and national honour, his Neapolitan Majesty gave an important lesson to future sovereigns, which will not, it is hoped, be thrown away; for, by the ratification of a treaty which he knew must be shortly violated in all its parts, a colour, for in those times nothing more is wanted to justify the abuse of power, was given to Buonaparte's subsequent proclamation, issued at Vienna, after the peace of Presburg, and in which he declared, with his usual arrogance, that "the dynasty of Naples had ceased to reign." However, unlike many of his threats, this was destined to be put into very prompt execution. That the treaty with France was agreed to, on the part of his Neapolitan Majesty, for the sole purpose of gaining time, there can be very little doubt; for, happening to be at Naples myself in 1805, I know there was a British military officer of distinction there as early as May, for the purpose of concerting measures with the court, respecting the introduction of our troops and those of Russia, who were disembarked, to the number of 24,000, in November of the same year. This circumstance, instead of serving the common cause, only tended to accelerate the ruin of his Neapolitan Majesty, and make the allies look ridiculous in the eyes of all rational politicians, and probably their own; for, after several weeks lost in negotiating, planning and devising means of

co-operation, the Russians re-embarked, and proceeded to Corfu. Their example was very soon followed by General Sir J. Craig, who conducted his 10,000 men to Messina, after an expedition that cost an immense sum to England, without being productive of one single advantage, except that of securing this island, which could be in no danger of attack for many months afterwards. Their Neapolitan Majesties, chagrined, and stung with disappointment at the "pusillanimous" conduct of their supposed deliverers, as they have since been known to exclaim, had no other alternative but that of re-embarking a second time for Palermo, where they landed * towards the latter end of January, 1806, and were received in a very dif-

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* Scarcely had the monarch set his foot on shore here, when the beautiful sonnet, fully expressive of the people's sentiments, and real state of Sicily, was circulated through the capital.

Signor gia torni al tuo letargo antico,
Salvo gia credi il tuo Sicano impero,
Questo è l' ingannno, non e il Gallo altero
Qui dentro o sire è il tuo fatal nemico,
Il merto oppresso, il nazional mendico,
Colmo di onor, di gloria ogni straniero,
La justizia venal, l' erario intiero
Vittima del capriccio, e dell' intrico.
Questi signor son le falangi, e sono
Le forze armati, e i bellici strumentr
Che struggeranno un di' lo scettro, e il trono
E mostreran, (tolta la benda indigna,)
Il sacio patto, onde vedran le genti
Gli obblighi di chi serve, e di chi regna!

ferent way from that of 1799. The unfortunate people of Sicily had, in the short space of a few months, experienced quite enough of the court to know, that all hopes of reform or amelioration from that quarter were blasted.

Although at the period of his Sicilian Majesty's quitting Naples in 1806, there was no change in the character of his court, yet it ought to be considered as an entirely new epoch in our relations with this monarch as well as his subjects; for while on the one hand we placed an army on his remaining territory as the only barrier between him and total destruction, he in the employment of that very ministry which had accelerated the loss of Naples by their crimes, and being the declared enemies of England, amply demonstrated that our friendship was ill bestowed on the other.

The Chevalier Acton was certainly an exception to that part of my observation which relates to the employment of our enemies; but it is well known, that however well inclined and warmly attached that able statesman was to us, he had always a powerful faction to contend with, amongst whom were many Frenchmen. It was impossible that he could be otherwise than attached to Great Britain, where his connections and property lay: in any other country and under a different monarch, Sir John would have doubtless been a great man; in Naples he partook of the prejudices of the day, and in showing such a disposition to patronize foreigners became extremely unpopular.

It is said that a short time before his death, which happened about two years ago, his most important papers were consigned to the minister here for the purpose of being forwarded to England; and they are supposed to contain an exact account of all the Neapolitan politics and intrigues since the commencement of the revolution.

Actuated on our part by that blind and mistaken partiality which has been the cause of so many errors and misfortunes, a sense of false delicacy, or rather want of magnanimity, prevented us from pointing out to his Sicilian Majesty the fatal tendency of his politics, and even insisting upon a line of conduct more conformable to the interests of Europe and humanity; no, it was reserved for a British administration, after the awful example of the past, calmly to witness the establishment and continuance of an unheard of system of oppression and tyranny on the very shores of a country that it sent an army to defend! and to crown the whole, to subsidize the authors of this degrading system with British gold. Will posterity believe this dreadful and extraordinary fact? What, in the name of heaven, I will ask, could have prompted a policy like the above? Was there any single event either in the history of Greece, Rome, or Carthage, to justify the measure? Or could we promise ourselves any result from such imbecility except that which has been actually experienced—the base ingratitude of a polluted court, the unequivocal hatred

of the people, and the contemptuous mockery of all Europe?

The queen being stung with rage and disappointment at the loss of a fine kingdom, without reflecting on the inevitable causes which led to that event, and angry with the English ministry because an army was not sacrificed to her wishes, we were destined henceforth to be the imaginary enemies of her Sicilian Majesty; nor has she ceased from that period till the present, to stigmatize Great Britain in the foulest and most ignominious terms of the bitterest reproach,* yet in obedience to the maxim of our holy religion have we borne every act of hostility with unexampled forbearance, and even when smote on one cheek, held up the other to our foes.

Glad to escape from the perfidious intrigues with which he was surrounded, Sir J. Craig retired from the army leaving the command of it to Sir John Stuart, whose gallant conduct shortly after proved that he was not unworthy of the trust reposed in him by the commander-in-chief. The arrival of Sir Sidney Smith at Palermo, revived the court from that despondency, hitherto

* The present views of the queen and the ministers are pretty evident from her open and avowed hatred to the English, whom she condescends in their presence to flatter with the meanest servility, while she has publicly declared that when she sees an Englishman she "feels the guillotine on her neck."

Hist. Survey p. 146, written in 1807.

occasioned by the judicious inflexibility of our military commander not to appropriate any part of his force to aiding its quixotic and chimerical expeditions to Naples, or the coast of Calabria. Fired by that innate bravery and habitual spirit of enterprize which had so often and successfully prompted him to undertake actions beyond the reach of ordinary characters, the British admiral freely entered into the scheme of regaining Naples, where Joseph Buonaparté had already made his triumphal entry amidst the acclamations of a people who would have joyfully hailed the Khan of Tartary as their deliverer. The hopes of plunder, effect of promises, and still more powerful incentive to human action, the dissemination of money in the two Calabrias, induced many of the inhabitants in those provinces to oppose the arms of France: in doing this, they were also prompted by that ferocious love of liberty which prefers secret robbery and assassination to the more legitimate practices of open war. Several partially successful attempts on the coast, but more particularly the gallant and obstinate defence of Gaeta, together with the capture of the Island of Capri, seemed to justify, in a limited degree, the efforts of the court, and might have eventually persuaded Sir J. Stuart to swerve from his first and laudable determination not to land any part of his army in Calabria, but his cool reception on disembarking at St. Eufamia in July, when not a soul amongst the natives obeyed the call of their sovereign by

joining his standard, proved the justice of his former suspicions; convinced of the inutility of the undertaking, but unwilling to retreat without giving the Calabrese a fair opportunity of testifying their boasted attachment to Ferdinand, he advanced against a French army twice as numerous as his own, and in totally defeating the bombastical Regnier, immortalized his own character, and gave the world a new proof that British valour, when properly directed, is irresistible.

It would have been singular indeed, if an event like the above had not roused the Calabrians, who when the fame of Sir John's victory at Maida was circulated, evinced a very general disposition to rise; but in doing so what were the consequences? an undisciplined rabble *without* a head, arms, or organization, vainly attempted to subdue experienced troops, in which most ridiculous undertaking, thousands perished, and a foundation was laid for those excessive cruelties which deluged the fields of both the Calabrias with blood for a twelvemonth after. While, however, the gallant hero of Maida was gathering laurels abroad, his removal from the command in Sicily was concerting at home; and accordingly when returned to Messina, about a month after the landing in Calabria, he found Lieutenant General Fox had been sent from Gibraltar to succeed him. This incident, though rather awkward, did not disconcert Sir John, who might have even anticipated the event, and he consequently not only con-

sented to remain in Sicily as second to the new commander-in-chief, but undertook the arduous task of conducting the war in Calabria, although Gaeta had fallen by this time, and no hopes whatever were held out by the success of the Calabrese. About to execute some fresh act of gallantry, Sir John Moore arrived at the British head quarters with a reinforcement of men, and quite unprepared for another supercession, Sir John was so fortunate as to be enabled to return to England, and leave a scene, in which he well knew, very little honour or glory awaited any person.

If any man on earth was calculated to achieve great things with circumscribed means, it was surely the ever to be lamented Sir John Moore; his past services, enterprizing spirit, and capacious mind, fitted him in a peculiar manner for the proposed service, he therefore sailed from Messina in one of our ships of war to reconnoitre the coast, and collect the necessary information previous to the prosecution of any further measure in favor of the court of Palermo. The result of his inquiries, as might be expected, was, that it would be futile, absurd, and ridiculous in the extreme to listen to any more proposals for the recovery of Naples. In consequence, therefore, of Sir John Moore's report, General Fox, with that firmness so peculiar to his character, and apparently inherent in his illustrious family, positively refused to co-operate with a Neapolitan force which had been collecting at Palermo for some time, in order

to attack Naples. When I add that these troops consisted of galley slaves liberated by the court, banditti, and Calabrese assassins, together with such chiefs as Pane de Grano, Fra Diavolo, and others equally distinguished by robberies and murders, you will agree with me in rejoicing that the British general did not consent to suffer the troops of our sovereign to coalesce with such a host of ruffians, contaminated as they were by the blackest crimes. The hereditary Prince and his brother Leopold were to have accompanied the Prince of Hesse in this modern Argonautic excursion, which, on her Sicilian Majesty's perceiving that we were not be moved into compliance, she gave up, breathing imprecations on the English.

In the Annual Register for 1806 you will find an admirable and correct account of Sicilian affairs, from the return of the court until the plan for invading Naples was completely exploded on our part, and as it is impossible to depict the true state of things in this island, at the close of the above year in more just or emphatical terms than the learned compiler of that work has in a very few words, I cannot do better than repeat them here—"While their Sicilian majesties were thus intent on the recovery of Naples, the importance of Sicily, the resources which it might be made to afford, and the means to be taken necessary for conciliating the affections of its inhabitants, and rousing them against the enemy, seemed never to have entered into their contemplation. When

the royal family were driven a second time to Sicily for shelter and protection, the Sicilians had vainly imagined, that in return for their assistance and fidelity, they would be relieved from jealous and injurious restrictions on their commerce and navigation, and raised to greater weight and consideration in the councils of their sovereign than they had hitherto attained: *their ancient constitution*, the venerable forms of which were still existing, *they were desirous to re-establish*, and no less attached to the English by ancient traditions than by hatred of the French, they fondly expected from us assistance and countenance in this great undertaking. But it has been the misfortune of England in the long war she has sustained against the different rulers of France, that, whether contending with a republic, an oligarchy, or a monarchy, *she has never had the people of any country on her side;* the protectress and champion of the old governments of Europe, *she has never availed herself of her power and influence* to mediate between the prejudices and fears of her allies, and the just claims and expectations of their subjects. Kingdom after kingdom has been subdued, throne after throne has been subverted without teaching governments that there is no safety for them but in the affection of their people, and that the price of affection is to deserve it and to return it. Two expulsions from Naples had not impressed these lessons on the court of Palermo; the Sicilians were neglected and despised,

their grievances were not redressed; their complaints were not listened to; their government was in the hands of strangers *surrounded by traitors;* and the power of England, instead of being extended to their relief, served only to uphold the authority of those who slighted and oppressed them!"

The unfortunate, but most important truths contained in this admirable paragraph, will, I hope, excuse me for its introduction; it ought to be read by the British ministry of future times with the most solemn attention, for in perusing these striking facts, they will be enabled to sigh over the errors of past days, and be taught a lesson of inestimable political importance.

The ensuing year, 1807, was marked by no event of very great consequence in Sicily; the devoted populace continued as usual, to bend under every kind of oppression that defective laws, and the corruption of their rulers could devise, while on our side we were manifesting a stoical indifference to their sufferings, and thought more of perfecting our soldiers in the "*goose step*"* than bringing the government to a sense of duty and propriety.

* This singular invention of the modern art of war, has been only very lately introduced into the British army; it consists of making the soldier stand for some time upon one leg, while the other extends before him in an angle of forty-five degrees, this practice is said to give great precision to his marching. At Messina a wag was heard to say that the invention was a very excellent one, so as it did not teach them to *run away*.

In pursuance of a new ministerial arrangement in England, General Fox was not only appointed commander-in-chief of the army, but had been also invested with the diplomatic functions. If, as some persons have since insinuated, his Excellency brought instructions with him to insist on an immediate change in the politics of his Sicilian majesty, this combination of the civil and military department might have been serviceable, but when it is considered that no such measure was then in the contemplation of our government, and that the old system was to be pursued, our relations with Sicily became infinitely more complicated and involved by constituting the military commander, whose duties obliged him to reside in Messina, minister plenipotentiary at the court. I believe there is scarcely any instance of any of the powers of antiquity having acted in this way under circumstances at all similar: for in the first place, to treat with the quibbling and deceitful statesmen, who followed the king from Naples, required constant personal attendance, united to great diplomatic talents; it was also absolutely necessary that he should be on the spot, in order the better to counteract the chicanery of his opponents and baneful effects of public opinion, which, though unhappily unobserved and unheeded by us, have always been very busily at work here since our arrival. In making the above remark I feel more anxious to point out the impolicy of uniting those two very important situa-

tions, than to depreciate the talents of General Fox, who was, I am convinced, as firm and able a negotiator as we have ever had in Sicily, and as to thoroughly estimating the character of those he had to deal with, he went infinitely beyond any of his successors. Whether the inefficacy of continuing the office of commander-in-chief and envoy extraordinary in the same person was recognized at home, or the administration had changed their minds on the subject, on the return of general Fox to England in 1807, Mr. Drummond was sent out as minister to the court of Palermo, when it was fully anticipated here that he must have been the harbinger of some good to the unfortunate people of Sicily, who, ready to encourage every hope of amelioration, however illusory, flattered themselves that so many changes could not be made by our government without an object in view. The arrival of Sir John Stuart as commander-in-chief shortly after, on the departure of the lamented hero of Corunna for Lisbon, tended still more to reanimate the popular wish. Alas! the cup of bitterness was not sufficiently drained, and the Sicilians were destined still to languish under all their former grievances.

The approaching crisis on the continent, and which ended in the declaration of war between Austria and France, was also a new source of activity to our army here, and that of his Sicilian Majesty. The commander-in-chief, having received directions to prepare the troops for embar-

kation, in order to make a diversion in favour of the Emperor of Germany, the Sicilian government was invited to co-operate, and accordingly put the greater part of their disposable force in motion, convinced that, by the new aspect of continental affairs, together with that unexpected energy on our part, the royal family was about to be immediately restored to his lost kingdom.

Human foresight and anticipation are said to be frequently exercised in vain: it was remarkably so in this instance; for, after as much apparent preparation as Xerxes made to invade Greece, the grand armada sailed towards the shores of Naples in the beginning of June, composed of 15,000 British troops and 10,000 Neapolitans, sufficient, one would imagine, to make a very serious impression upon a comparatively defenceless country. Our troops were never in a better disposition to meet the enemy, and, as may be imagined, their hearts beat high to emulate the glory which had been acquired on a former occasion. A prosperous voyage brought the two divisions to the immediate vicinity of Naples Bay in a few days. Our part of the expedition was commanded by Sir John Stuart in person; that of the Sicilians boasted of the young Prince Leopold as their chief. In the naval department, Captain Sprainger, of the Warrior, superintended.

At this eventful part of my relation, you are doubtless preparing yourself to hear of some sanguinary deeds in arms; perhaps you already see King

Joseph and his raggamuffins flying from the capital, and seeking safety in flight, as his predecessor had a short time before. Permit me to arrest the progress of your imagination. Instead of proceeding to terra firma, an insular warfare was preferred, and an attack of the whole army directed against Ischia and Procida, which surrendered after a slight resistance. The possession of those formidable positions were naturally supposed to be only a prelude to other, and more important, triumphs; yet, singular as the fact may appear, after remaining here about a month, the whole armament returned to Sicily. When the expedition sailed from Messina first, a small division of our troops had been ordered to possess itself of the Castle Scylla, and other military posts opposite to Messina, which it effected; but the fate of the grand expedition decided that of the smaller, and it abandoned its acquisition when that came back.

It has repeatedly been laid to our charge, that before any of our great enterprizes are ready to be put into execution, the golden opportunity vanishes. I fear the assertion is but too just in the present instance, not to mention the insignificant scale upon which the operation of 25,000 men commenced. The ever-to-be-remembered battles of Essling and Aspern were fought on the banks of the Danube on the 21st of May, while our forces were scarcely thinking of leaving Sicily. On the 6th of July, which once more decided the fate of Austria on the field of Wagram, they were getting

ready to embark, for the purpose of returning to this island. Now we all know that the greatest events are sometimes brought about by very trifling causes; who then can say, but that, had the above body of men been landed in a vulnerable part of Italy, of which I know there were very many at that period, two months sooner, the indignant people of Italy might not have made a grand exertion to shake off the yoke of France? A descent at Civita Vecchia was proposed after the capture of Ischia; why was it not carried into execution? What possible benefit could 25,000 men render to the cause of Europe, shut up in two barren islands? In fact, had it been by any means possible to land the troops in Upper Italy, there are many reasons to suppose that several of the reinforcements, which enabled Buonaparte to gain the battle of Wagram, could not have joined. In making these observations, I beg you to believe that I have no wish or intention of diminishing the military fame of the commander-in-chief; it has afforded me infinite satisfaction to have formerly had so fair an opportunity of adding my humble testimony of his talents and gallantry to that of a grateful country. I have always been satisfied that Sir John Stuart acted in perfect conformity to his instructions on the occasion alluded to; and to the foregoing remarks it will probably be replied, that the nature of circumstances rendered it necessary that our army should not lose sight of Sicily in its zeal for the cause of Austria. This and many other

sound reasons might be offered in defence of the plan and execution; however, as the whole will probably be discussed by some able historian, more capable of developing causes and effects, I have only further to add, that it is highly important to detect our past errors, if we wish to avoid those of the future.

If her Sicilian Majesty was irritated upon several former occasions, it need not excite your surprize when I tell you, that on this her indignation exceeded all bounds of description; there was scarcely any epithet of reproach which she did not heap on the English, nor did her Majesty spare poor Prince Leopold, who came in for a large share of the most scurrilous abuse: so enraged was her Majesty, that she determined to send her part of the expedition back, with orders to make a landing in Calabria, and it was with the utmost difficulty this resolution was set aside. It is more than probable that the result of the Ischian affair gave rise to those manifestations of hostility on the part of the Sicilian cabinet against us, the recapitulation of which will occupy a considerable part of the following pages.

No sooner had the peace of Presbourg been signed, than Buonaparte, knowing his power to have sustained a vital blow in the late war, and influenced by that miraculous sagacity which has still enabled him to enslave Europe, looked around for the best expedient of repairing his almost broken fortunes. He found this in demanding a

wife from that very House he had only a few weeks before humbled to the dust. What an important event in the history of Europe! with his hands saturated in the blood of Austria; after having, ever since his ill-fated accession to power, made her and every other nation the indiscriminate object of rapine and plunder; after the murder of the Duke D'Enghien, and exhausting all the atrocities of human nature, exulting in iniquity, and adding unutterable insolence to endless injuries, Napoleon demands the hand of Maria Louisa, destined by Providence to become an addition to the general sacrifice; and while it completed the humiliation of his rival, gave to the whole world an instance of hypocrisy unequalled in the history of mankind. I have no doubt but that posterity will contemplate this singular circumstance as one of the most extraordinary events of the present day; yet however much the tyrant may exult in his triumph, experience has taught us that the vengeance of Heaven is sure, although protracted; and I trust that the period is not very remote, when, looking with an eye of commiseration on the sorrows and degradation of Europe, the same power who tolerated his elevation for the wisest purposes, may also be pleased to hurl him from that throne, the occupation of which has only led him to the perpetration of new crimes, for the oppression and enslavement of his fellow-creatures.

When the political farce of Buonaparte's marriage was completed, his next attention naturally

enough, turned to the means by which it could contribute to his favorite scheme of universal dominion, and increased hostility to England. Not satisfied with shutting us out of the continent, *and placing the ports of the United Kingdom in a state of blockade*, this modern Herod opened a communication with one of those allies, whom the power of England had hitherto saved from his iron sway; fertile in promises, which there was no intention of performing, he addressed letters to the heads of the Sicilian government, which had, for some time, become heartily tired of our friendship, and was prepared for any proposition that would enable them to get rid of their "*English allies*," as we were called. The precise period at which the first letters between Napoleon and her Sicilian Majesty were exchanged, is only known to the British ministry, and those persons in this island who are said to have intercepted the correspondence. With respect to the famous intercepted letter in Spain which Madame Beuret forwarded to her husband at Madrid, you doubtless recollect to have seen it in the public papers of the day;* whether

* Whether the letter is genuine or not, I can conceive the following expressions to be precisely such as Napoleon would be most likely to indulge in. "How characteristic is it of commercial nations to sacrifice their allies! The hearts of the English are *metallified*, and they act only from the impulse of gain; with them there is neither honor nor faith, nor do they hold any obligation sacred." The bait held out to her Sicilian

authentic or fabricated it is a curious and interesting document, and made so great an impression, that the Sicilian chargé d' affaires at Cadiz, was directed to require a document from the Supreme Junta, expressive of their belief of its falsity, which circumstance confirmed many people in their previous opinion, that something of the kind had actually been written; however this may have been, certain it is, that the style and language held in it are precisely of such a nature as one

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Majesty is certainly rather chimerical, but by no means out of character. "As to your Majesty's house, I will make every possible exertion in its favor. Master of Spain and Portugal, *it will not be difficult for me to take Gibraltar*, and I shall then exclude the English from the Mediterranean; they will lose Malta, and on the *coast of Africa and Egypt*, I shall find colonies superior to those I have lost." * * * * * *

"* * * * * * * In this point of view, Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, Malta, the Ionian Islands, and several of the Archipelago, will form the patrimony of your Majesty's line, which, in that case, may look upon itself as the *England of the Mediterranean.*"

The note of Mr. Bardaxi, secretary to the council of Regency, and addressed to the Sicilian chargé d'affaires at Cadiz, written for the purpose of contradicting the authenticity of the above letter, contains a most fulsome panegyric on her Sicilian Majesty, but goes not a step in the way of refutation.

It was actually believed here, that a treaty with Buonaparte had been signed on the 12th of January, nor was the report officially denied till the 10th of March, when old Circello wrote a very formal note to Lord Amherst, positively denying that any treaty had been entered into *on the part of his Sicilian Majesty.* Buonaparte's marriage was, by an odd coincidence, celebrated at Vienna, on the 11th of the same month.

might expect from Buonaparte, more especially, after the celebration of a marriage which seemed to insure the future co-operation of Austria, in fulfilling his plans of aggrandizement. Upon the extent of those specious engagements by which Napoleon bound himself to the court of Palermo, the public are equally uninformed, but time, which developes all things, will, I have not the smallest doubt, clear up this point. Some deny that the act of betraying the English army, and driving us out of the Mediterranean, was to be rewarded with the royal family's re-establishment on the throne of Naples, asserting, that according to a passage in the intercepted letter, an insular empire was to be formed within the Straits of Gibraltar. These facts are of little importance, as connected with the main point of not only withdrawing themselves from any connexion with their old and best friends, to whom the house of Bourbon in general had been indebted for such signal favors, but converting hatred into the most unheard-of and unprincipled hostility, which, if successful, would have inevitably led to consequences the most fatal to our political existence, and given the people of Sicily up to a persecution more sanguinary than that of Sylla and Marius. As a convincing proof of the sincerity with which the views of her Sicilian Majesty were formed, there was not a single Neapolitan in the administration who had not a thorough knowledge of the plot that was prepar-

ing; they were all ready to second any scheme which held out the prospect of returning to Naples, and revenging themselves on those patriots who had so often but in vain solicited the interference of the British cabinet, to deliver them from their oppressors. In order to raise money for the accomplishment of the intended plan, the subsidy not being sufficient, although, lately increased to £400,000 per annum, the tax of one per cent. already described, was imposed in violation of the fundamental laws of the kingdom: it was on this occasion that the whole population cast their eyes upon the English minister at Palermo.

Although Murat's famous expedition into Calabria in 1810, had no other effect than making him much more unpopular and ridiculous than he was before in the eyes of the Neapolitans, the circumstances to which it gave rise on our part, are too important not to be noticed in giving an account of Sicily.

Immediately after the peace of Presbourg, Buonaparte placed a force of nearly 20,000 men at the disposal of his brother-in-law Joachim, and on that new prince's leaving Paris, whither he had gone to celebrate the nuptials of Maria Louisa, the Corsican is said to have given him the most positive directions to invade this island, and to relieve the court from the annoyance of its English allies; who were, according to the old saying, to be driven into the sea! Flushed with the most sanguine hopes of success, Murat did not lose a moment on

his return to Naples, in ordering the troops to march, while a large flotilla of gun vessels were prepared to co-operate by water; and every fishing boat on the coast put into requisition, besides very heavy contributions levied. This was in the beginning of April, at which time Sir John Stuart commanded the army at Messina, and Vice-Admiral George Martin had his flag flying on board the Canopus at Palermo; my Lord Amherst was the embassador. From the state of Sicily in the early part of May, and the very few ships of war we had on the station, there are, I think, very few persons, if any, who will assert that Murat's inactivity was not a most fortunate circumstance for us; or that a *coup de main* would not have been a source of serious alarm if not dangerous to our safety: and as it was, the amazing facility with which he assembled an army of more than 30,000 men, and six hundred armed vessels of different descriptions, without sustaining any considerable loss, ought to be considered as a very important lesson to those who are in future destined to defend the island. From the mild season of the year, and totally unprotected state of the whole coast between Naples and Scylla, a very small squadron, commanded by an enterprizing officer, and stationed in the Bay of Salerno, would have completely prevented the accumulation of such a naval force as that which, in the course of two months, assembled opposite Messina. It was really melancholy to see convoys of seventy,

eighty, and a hundred sail of vessels, loaded with cannon, provisions, &c., going quietly along for a distance of more than two hundred miles, and scarcely a single vessel of war to molest them. His Majesty's ship Cumberland, a seventy-four, was dispatched in the early part of June, and scoured the coast with a frigate or two; but her want of success amply proved the total inefficacy of employing such an unwieldly force upon a service that required small vessels alone to render it at all useful; but the subsequent gallantry displayed by Captains Nicholas of the Pilot and Prescott of the Weazle, however calculated to reflect honor on themselves, produced little or no effect upon the main objects of the enemy. With respect to our military proceedings, they assumed an immediate and unusual appearance of activity, after the French camps had been formed on the heights of Meli and Point Pezzo, directly opposite the Faro: a great number of batteries were constructed (and not before they were wanted) between the latter point and Messina; a large redoubt was even begun on the height over *Arena Bianca*, and which commands that part of the coast in the immediate vicinity of Pelorus. After some time a respectable naval force was collected, and three line of battle ships were moored close to the beach, north of Messina, while a number of frigates, brigs, and gun boats, accompanied by bomb vessels, were kept cruizing about the straits. Towards July, Vice Admiral Martin having considerably aug-

mented his force, and called in the Cumberland that had been cruizing to so little purpose off Cape Vaticano and La Manthea, anchored a squadron outside the Faro, so as to prevent any attempt of the enemy towards Milazzo: on the part of Murat similar exertions to those of our own were visible, and like us he seemed from the day of his arrival to be more occupied in fortifying his position, than thinking of a spirited and prompt attack, by which he would alone have had the smallest chance of success, or could receive that assistance from a formidable and well known party prepared for his reception at Messina. Expectant as every one was to see great things done, when both sides had made all the necessary preparations, it was really most laughable to contemplate succeeding events; the nearest point of land in Calabria (Point Pezzo) to Sicily is at least two miles: on that and the opposite shore, mortar batteries were formed; these were kept open upon each other from day light till dusk for several weeks; and when I inform you that during the whole time the only injury created on either side did not exceed the destruction of a few old women and some cats and dogs, although many thousands were expended, a tolerable idea may be formed of this novel species of warfare. It should however, be added, in justification of the bomb hostility, that it afforded a wonderfully fine sight to the gaping multitude, particularly on those frequent occasions of the shells bursting half way

across, by which the spectators were enabled to enjoy their laugh without being under the necessity of scampering away as they were wont to do when they reached the shore. Another means resorted to by us was that of cannonading the enemy's tents, marine batteries, &c. Upon one of those never to be forgotten occasions, the Sicilian and Neapolitan public were favored with quite a new kind of stratagem; this was neither more nor less than a *naval diversion!* the first, I believe, recorded in our history or that of any other country; there certainly never was a more brilliant spectacle in the Straits of Messina since the days of Æneas, as that exhibited at the dawn of a fine morning in July, 1810, and which was rendered still more pleasing by there not being more blood shed than you might see at a sham fight on Hounslow Heath. About 4 o'clock A.M. an immense number of gun vessels, *scampavias*, and barges, &c. began to move from the Sicilian shore in three divisions, and, followed by several mortar boats, they slowly approached the Calabrian side; when within a respectable distance, both parties commenced a tremendous fire, which was kept up with mutual spirit, till both being tired of fighting, the combat ceased: while the action continued, four ships of war, in obedience to a previous order, had got under way, and hovered about "between Scylla and Charybdis," nor did the utmost efforts of the French cannoniers, enable them to send one solitary ball on board these ships, intended, as already

stated, to make a diversion in favor of the poor gun boats and shallops.

With the exception of a very gallant attack made by our flotilla and a brig of war, the Weazle, on a division of the enemy's vessels at Bagrara, there is not a single event of this extraordinary military and naval campaign worth recording; I shall therefore hasten to relieve you from the tedium naturally occasioned by a detail, which is altogether divested of battles and murder, the only accessaries that render such things palatable now-a-days.

After having taken so much pains and trouble, apparently in vain, Murat soon perceived that his followers were heartily tired of their expedition: the greatest discontent prevailed on board the boats which had been *forcibly put in requisition* to carry the troops across; and a scarcity of provisions induced many to desert. The season was rapidly advancing, and how could he return to Naples without making some kind of an attempt on Sicily? it was almost impossible to avoid it, consequently on the evening of September the 18th, he directed the troops to embark in two divisions which were to land at different points; that formed on the north of Point Pezzo is supposed to have been destined for an attack on the Faro, and consisted of the main body; the other, amounting only to about 4,000, actually put off from the shore when the tide suited, and 3,500 succeeded in disembarking *(undiscovered)* at San Stefano, six

miles south of Messina about midnight; these troops found no difficulty in gaining possession of the heights, and were proceeding to make their ulterior dispositions, when observed by two of the 20th dragoons, that had been sent out as the nightly patrole; and at two o'clock in the morning, the alarm being given, a division of our army was directed to march from Messina and attack them. If at this critical moment Murat had attempted to land north of the (Faro, for Vice Admiral Martin and his squadron were no longer anchored there, having gone into the harbour of Messina for shelter), he would, I have not the smallest doubt, have succeeded, however great his loss might have been, as in this case both the wings of our army must have been pretty well occupied; this would have doubtless animated the French party in the town to rise, and under such a combination who can say what might have been the result? For my own part, though, I feel convinced the attack must have eventually failed, yet it struck me at the time that an infinity of trouble and uneasiness would have been given to us, if Murat had landed; he chose, however, to remain on the right side of the water, and 800 men of his advanced guard were obliged to surrender at day light. The vessels that landed this division received a number of the troops, and the commander, General Cavignac, on board again, and retreated in safety to the opposite shore, there being only one small

boat taken by our flotilla. One of the French officers taken on this occasion, and who has since broke his parole and absconded from Malta, commanded a Corsican regiment, at the landing; full of the gasconading style of his countrymen, he has often declared in that island, that he could have kept the whole British force at bay for several days, but when he saw that the other part of the grand design was not executed, it was no use to persevere: his opinion of the general success of a combined attack appears to have been equally sanguine.

This operation of the French chief seems to have been the winding up of his retreat and discomfiture, after five months fatigue, expense, and trouble, during which he exhausted his treasury, and exerted every species of imposition on the Neapolitans; if it produced any effect on us, it was, that of occupying a very large military and naval force, which might have been much more profitably employed elsewhere, particularly the former, whose services were so much wanted in Spain: the expense incurred by our government on the occasion is supposed to have exceeded a million sterling! The various conjectures, sentiments, and rumours, to which this memorable Calabrian and Sicilian campaign gave rise, would occupy a very large space; it will be sufficient for my purpose to observe, that the celebrated *Veni, vidi, vici*, could not be applied to Murat, nor was it claimed by any one on our side.

Several people have observed, that if it had been possible to recall the spirit of Agathocles,* and give him a proper force, that celebrated general might have turned the tables, by invading the enemy's country: but we do not live in the days of Grecian or Roman heroism.

It would be to betray a want of regard to the interests of our own country, if I was to omit a well authenticated circumstance connected with the expedition of Murat in this year; it is, that a great number of fishermen and other individuals were in the pay of a certain party, for the purpose of joining the enemies of its credulous benefactor in the event of their landing with any force: it remains for the violators of public faith and private virtue to answer at the bar of Heaven for a conduct so flagitious; if known, or anticipated on our part, how are we to palliate our almost criminal indifference towards such treatment, infamous as it was unmerited? I trust we shall yet live to see the day, that British blood will not be shed in vain, when faithless allies are not cherished, and crying insults received with impunity.†

* Every one must recollect the expedition of this famous tyrant of Syracuse to the territory of Carthage, at the very moment his own capital was invested by the fleets and armies of that power; an event which I have always considered as one of the finest examples of bold enterprize afforded by the history of those renowned times, and without a parallel, I believe, amongst the moderns.

† It is particularly worthy of remark, that his Sicilian Majesty issued no proclamation to his subjects on the meditated

The discussion of this subject naturally leads me into a few reflections on the state of our army in Sicily. It was at the above period, and continues to this day in one of the highest order and discipline; and it gives me great pleasure to add, that those pernicious effects formerly occasioned by inebriety, dampness of climate, *mal aria*, and other causes, are daily less felt, in consequence of the salutary precautions taken for their prevention within the three last years, which have amply proved, that by care and attention the most seemingly insurmountable obstacles may be overcome. These objects, important to the nation as they are dear to the interests of humanity and benevolence, will doubtless continue to animate every future commander-in-chief who may be intrusted with that high honour in Sicily.

If an humble individual might be permitted to offer an objection to the organization of our military force in this island, I should take the liberty of observing upon the admission of so many foreigners into the staff; in fact, I cannot but consider this as a glaring defect in our system: does it not imply either that our own countrymen have not the talents requisite to fill those places, or the

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attack till the 10th of July, long after the enemy had began to assemble; even then it was signed by Tomasi, the minister of finance. Where were the executive ministers, Circello and Castellintini on that occasion? Besides, when the barons were exiled, was not "*Ferdinand*" written under it in large letters? What a gross insult to the British Sovereign and nation!

merit which entitles them to advancement in so important a department? Its effect in creating jealousy and dissatisfaction is uncommonly great; young men of genius and talent remain unnoticed, and others think it of no use to perfect themselves in a knowledge of foreign languages, the incentive being destroyed; but above all, the secrets of our military operations are confided to persons, who, however honourable in their principles, are not natives of the united kingdom. Out of about fifty officers, of which the general staff is composed, twenty-three are foreigners; in the quarter-master and adjutant-general's department there are eleven.* Without some attention is paid to this subject, I apprehend we shall be a long time before an eligible staff corps can be formed amongst our own officers, not to mention many very serious inconveniences, which are well known to arise from the employment of so many strangers.

By a previous arrangement, the flotilla at Messina, which is a source of immense expense to us, was, strange to relate, under the command and management of a captain of the army! and several subalterns, selected from the different regiments, who had charge of divisions. On the appointment of the present commander-in-chief, and when the comparative inutility of the plan was completely exploded, a naval captain and several

* These gentlemen are composed of Germans, French, and Italians.

lieutenants were sent out to perform the service. Fortunately, as it happened, the choice of a commander fell upon Captain R. Hall, a man who is above all others calculated to fill the situation with honour to himself and credit to his country, and who is a rare instance amongst naval men, of proving that the successful pursuit of literature is not incompatible with professional glory, nor the indulgence of social pleasure an enemy to the strictest discipline. Although it must be confessed that the flotilla is still composed of an odd amalgamation of English, Sicilians, Neapolitans, and Calabrians, yet the successes of Captain H., and his well known gallantry, promise every thing from their future efforts.

In taking my leave of the British army in this island, I feel very sincere pleasure in being enabled to mention amongst others the name of one, General Donkin, quarter-master-general, an officer no less distinguished in the walks of private life than he is for the possession of talents which have made him a most important acquisition to the army ever since his arrival from Engand. Without any personal acquaintance with General D., I have reason to believe that he is infinitely better versed in Sicilian politics than any other officer in Sicily; on which account I trust he is destined to fill a situation of much greater consequence at some future period, and one in which the sphere of his abilities may be extended for the benefit not only of Sicily but of Great Britain. Both the gentle-

men whom I have thus taken the liberty of introducing to your notice will not, I am sure, accuse me of wanton adulation; the tenor of my former letter does not betray a great disposition to flatter any one; but merit, wherever found, possesses a sort of charm, which, like the immutable power of attraction, draws forth praise from the most cynical observer of human actions.

On the failure of Murat's plans, Lord Amherst and Sir John Stuart hoped that a joint representation to the court upon the great impolicy of the proposed taxation might be successful; but what were their feelings and surprize when, instead of obtaining the repeal of the decree, the British merchants, contrary to the faith of the most solemn treaties, were called upon, and obliged to pay the tax also. There has been no part of our conduct here which tended to alienate the regard of the natives so much as the singular forbearance with which we bore the above act, tantamount, in the opinion of many, to a declaration of war; but we went still further in the way of docility to the will of the court. Five noblemen, Belmonte, Aci, Villarosa, Petrulla, and Villa Franca, with a degree of virtue and firmness which did honour to their characters, represented the manifest injustice of his Sicilian Majesty in exacting an impost in this unconstitutional manner from his subjects. These much-injured personages felt of course satisfied, that at the worst an appeal from them to the envoy of his

Britannic Majesty would shield them from the resentment of the court; but neither their patriotism nor virtue could persuade us to interfere, and they were embarked on board a Sicilian corvette which lay at Palermo moored alongside the flag-ship of Rear-admiral Boyle, and triumphantly transported to the islands which had been formerly appropriated only to the reception of murderers and banditti, by virtue of the underwritten decree.* Thus

* "Royal Edict. Palermo, 19th July, 1811.

"It having been represented to his Majesty, that on several occasions the under-mentioned subjects have shewn manifest proofs of turbulence, and of a disposition to interrupt the public tranquillity, having taken the advice proper on such occasions, and, after mature deliberation on the consequences of such disobedient conduct, he has resolved, in his sovereign pleasure, to order the arrest and exile to different islands of the following persons:—The Prince of Belmonte, the Prince of Villa Franca, who is also suspended from his functions of colonel of the first regiment of royal dragoons, &c., the Prince of Petrulla, the Prince of Villarmosa, the Prince D'Aci, who is also dismissed from his post of adjutant-general to the king, &c. &c. &c.

"(Signed) FERDINAND."

Here is a fine example of the liberty of the subject!!!—in a country too which has been supported by the gold of England for so many years. Will posterity believe that such things were tolerated by their forefathers? They cannot—it is impossible. In order to complete this act of proscription, the very edict for sending all strangers (meaning the English travellers, merchants, &c.) out of Sicily, was made out, and laid before the King for his signature; and I have it from almost indisputable authority, that Lord V——, then at Palermo, was very near being sent to Maretimo with Prince Petrulla! Mr. D. knows more about this matter.

was an event most oppressive in itself doubly aggravated by the manner of putting into execution. I should be glad to know what our sophists about political morality and the law of nations, in England, would have said and done, if present on an occasion like the above, when the subjects of the freest government on earth were made accessaries to such nefarious proceedings, setting the principles of law and justice at defiance as these did.

It was in the midst of these transactions, and while an incessant correspondence was kept up with the enemy, that our embassador departed for England, leaving Mr. Douglas as secretary of legation, and Mr. Fagan,* the consul general, to fight

* I have had occasion to mention the name of Mr. Fagan before: it is now time to pay the just tribute of applause to this gentleman's official talents, and that of private friendship to his exalted merit. Born in Ireland, and stimulated at an early age by an ardent love of the fine arts, Mr. F. visited Rome, more from choice than necessity. Arrived at the former capital of the world, to which he was led by so laudable a passion, it is not to be wondered at, that he surveyed the treasures of the Vatican, and Casa d' Albani with the enthusiasm of genius; the objects seen in those famous repositories and a thousand others, soon determined him in the pursuit of a divine profession, besides exciting his perseverance in another department closely connected with it, that of rescuing from darkness and oblivion those productions of the ancient masters which were lost to the world, either through natural causes, the effects of barbarism, or other accidents. The labour and expence attending an undertaking of this sort did not retard his exertions, and in the discovery of above three hundred statues, besides fragments of various descriptions, in the course of a few years, Mr. F. not only gratified

the future diplomatic battles in the best way they could. Here it should be observed, that the recent

his own feelings, but rendered a most important service to civilization; he was at the same time successfully occupied in studying from the works of Raphael, Michael Angelo, Poussin, and other masters. The progress made by Mr. F. in correctness of design and delicacy in colouring, proves that he did not study those celebrated models in vain: however, as his avocations in this way were rather those of an amateur than a professional man, he did not perhaps devote all that time to the art which might have insured considerable pecuniary advantages; but his portraits and historical subjects, of which there are a great number in the galleries of Rome, were very highly esteemed, for the above mentioned requisites, without which, painting ceases to be any thing more than a mere mechanical art. The leisure moments of Mr. Fagan, unlike those of many of our countrymen who visit Rome, were employed in making copies of all the statues, bas-reliefs, fragments, &c., found scattered about in such numbers previous to the spoliation and plunder of the French; and in this department I venture to add, that he has collected the materials of a very interesting work, which will I trust be given to the public on his return to England. When the Goths of modern times came to Rome, Mr. F., in common with the whole community of learning and arts, had the mortification of seeing, as it were, the sanctuary of sculpture and painting violated by the unprincipled removal of all that was dear to genius, from the banks of the Tiber to those of the Seine; where, after being transplanted from their native soil, they lost more than half their value.*

Mr.

* In the event of such a general peace being ever concluded, as the friends of justice and humanity sigh for, let us hope that the French government will be obliged to restore the statues, paintings, and cameos stolen from Italy, as Scipio Africanus forced the Carthaginians to deliver up those which its generals had plundered from Sicily, in the first and second Punic wars. The effect of executing the former measure is infinitely more important than many people imagine, and I think there are few Frenchmen of a liberal mind who would object to such a demand; the ancients I believe never tolerated the above species of pillage, at least I hope not.

publication of Captain Pasley's work on our military policy seems to have attracted the particular

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Mr. F. was not, however, doomed to see that alone, for animated by the prospects that opened when the Neapolitans entered Rome in 1798, he distributed a large sum of money and provisions amongst the populace. On Mack's defeat and flight, Mr. F. had no other alternative except that of following the latter example, leaving behind him property to a large amount; this misfortune was further embittered by the loss of an amiable and beloved wife, caused principally by fright and the necessity of removing soon after her accouchement. On the peace of Amiens, he returned to the scene of his former exertions in the cause of virtue and hospitality: what did he see? Rome despoiled of its treasures, and the people vitiated by principles of modern French liberty! Yet this great city still possessed charms of which no conqueror could well deprive it: the hidden treasures remained, nor had the enemy taken away its superb palaces, triumphal arches, obelisk, or the incomparable frescos of a Raphael, and a Michael Angelo Buonarotti. The most trifling pleasures of human life are however but fleeting: the war was renewed, and in 1805, Mr. F. was once more destined to be driven from his adopted home. At this period his loss, of property actually left behind, exceeded £18,000. Coming to Sicily, a place very far from being suited to the disposition of such a man, he was nominated to the situation he now and ever since his appointment has filled with so much credit; and in return for his exertions and sacrifices in favour of the Sicilian government, he has been suspended and ill used. When I say that the emoluments of the Consul general here are barely sufficient for a man's own support, there is, I am sure, no one who will pretend to deny the assertion. This scantiness of means must be very severely felt by any person, but particularly one whose house and purse were for so many years open to his countrymen and all ranks of distinctions who visited Rome: numbers of these are in England, and will bear ample testimony to this truth. Led probably by a sense of personal civilities experienced during my short stay at Palermo,

notice of his Majesty's ministers, and that, determined to act upon it, they made up their minds upon a material change of our conduct towards Sicily. It was this circumstance which most probably led to the recall of Lord Amherst and Sir John Stuart, for the purpose of once more uniting the civil and military authority in the same person. Upon the propositions of Captain Pasley a great difference of opinion naturally existed; and although there might be a great deal of

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beyond my prescribed limits of a biographical sketch, I have the consolation of knowing, that enough could not be said in praise of the present object, whose influence, civil and political, here has procured him the entire confidence of my Lord William Bentinck, and rendered the nation very great services. The consular duties are unhappily very inimical to the cultivation of the fine arts, it cannot be supposed that the transition from a protest or bill of lading to the composition of an historical group, can be very agreeable or likely to improve a man's style. It is true, Mr. F. has, in the course of six years, been enabled, from the little time afforded him, to give the first touches to a very beautiful subject—Christ raising the ruler of the synagogue's daughter—"*and he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying maid arise.*"* This is uncommonly well treated—if ever finished I am convinced it will redound much to his praise.

Loath to abandon excavation, Mr. F. has kept a person occasionally employed, and been fortunate enough to procure a few specimens: but these are chiefly fragments. To succeed in a pursuit of this kind, for which he is, above all other persons in the Mediterranean best calculated, Mr. F. should receive the patronage and encouragement of his Majesty's government: but the importance of this subject has not as yet excited its due share of attention.

* St. Luke, c. 8., v. 54.

justice in his plan of taking what he calls military possession of the islands, for my own part I was, from the first period of our arrival, induced to consider it as altogether superfluous, and at all events of a most secondary nature; satisfied from the sentiments of many enlightened natives, and my own observations, that, until liberty was given to the people, a formidable army could never be raised in Sicily. In fact, it always appeared to me, that leaving the military part of the island to the government, and allowing no subsidy whatever, which has, I am convinced, been completely thrown away, we should invariably direct our efforts to relieve the condition of the people: in doing this a wide field of meritorious exertion was open to our government; they were possessed of ample means; and in gaining the hearts of a grateful people, they would have done infinitely more good than by a measure which has since drawn upon them the obloquy of some of our best political writers.

Resuming my narrative of the court's conduct, and passing over a great variety of insults and indignities which succeeded the embassador's departure from Palermo, I am desirous of calling your attention particularly to the suspension of our consul general, capture of the Greek pollacca——, with an English licence, by the Queen's own privateers, her subsequent condemnation, and, finally, the treatment experienced by Mr. Campbell. These are all facts, of a most important nature, so

clearly developed in a pamphlet published by a gentleman of high integrity at Messina, (and of which some short extracts are given in the Appendix,) that I shall not attempt to offer a single observation on them, except to say, that Great Britain has often declared war against powers that never gave her one-tenth part of the insult calmly sustained by us on this memorable occasion.

Nearly worn out with their sufferings, both the people of Sicily and English residents received the account of Lord William Bentinck's nomination to the high situation which his Excellency now holds, with inexpressible marks of applause, connecting with it, as they did, a conviction that more spirited and effectual measures would be adopted on his arrival than had hitherto existed. Indeed, the tenor of the ministerial prints had led us to believe, that nothing short of a declaration of war would satisfy government in the event of the court of Sicily's refusing to accede to its wishes. Expectation being for several months kept alive, owing to those extraordinary delays which in England take place between the appointment and departure of embassadors, his Lordship at length arrived at the capital, about the 30th of July. To describe the sensation created by this event in every part of Sicily, particularly when it was given out that he came with full powers to redress the people's grievances, is beyond the power of language; an universal burst of approbation, followed by a thousand benedic-

tions on the great English nation, marked the sense of every part of the community; ignorant of the fate which still awaited them, every one gave a loose to expressions of the most unlimited satisfaction; but the song of joy was soon turned into one of sorrow and despair! Those who are acquainted with the effects of disappointed hope on the human mind, even in the most ordinary circumstances, will be alone enabled to judge of the mingled sentiments of grief and disapprobation expressed by the whole nation, when, instead of immediate steps being taken for the assemblage of a parliament to inquire into existing abuses, insisting on the instant recall of the exiled barons, and removal of the Neapolitans from office, nothing was talked of but raising a military force to co-operate with the allies in Spain, and giving Lord William Bentinck the command of the Sicilian army! It is for the judge of human nature, my dear friend, to anticipate the better feelings of all classes on this melancholy occasion. A people who had for several years been expecting their deliverance from Great Britain, and who, upon our account, had borne every species of oppression, to see themselves forgotten, and once more given up to the tyranny of the court, was too much—it operated like electricity on thousands; and many who had hitherto attributed our forbearance to motives of delicacy, were now the most vociferous in upbraiding us with pusillanimity and weakness; and every day's experience

seemed to confirm their opinion, for having delivered his credentials the new envoy and commander-in-chief was most coolly received at court. As usual, the protracted and illusory forms of negotiation were substituted for those of force and sound policy, which it is imagined could not be resorted to by Lord William without a breach of his instructions, not having received sufficient powers from the ministry at home! After several weeks completely lost in attempting to persuade her Sicilian Majesty to a sense of propriety and approval of the terms proposed, during which time many insults continued to be offered to the British, and no grievance whatever was redressed, his Lordship suddenly departed for England. Upon this remarkable and extraordinary event being announced as likely to take place, it was generally conjectured that the queen, rather than suffer the embassador to depart, would have made every concession he required. Her Majesty knew us too well, to be guilty of such a weakness; she called to mind the whole catalogue of our political and diplomatic errors; and, above all, recollected the secret compact recently entered into with Buonaparte, which required that time should be gained in order to insure success. The French fleet in Toulon were ready and had even attempted to sail, but the vigilance of Sir Edward Pellew's fleet kept them in check; the season of the year also prevented them from moving then. All these things were points which influenced the conduct

of the Sicilian Cabinet, and even made it evident that the determination of Lord William Bentinck was most gratifying to their wishes. The proclamation of General Maitland, second in command, when his Lordship left Palermo, is an important document, and, considering the extreme caution that had been uniformly observed of not giving any offence to the court, conveys infinitely more allusions to the actual state of things than any former paper of that description did: its entire meaning was, however, only known to those who had closely watched the proceedings of the French party. It commences by the following passage, which can be considered as little less than a pledge to the people, of our future intentions to make them free: "Lieutenant General Maitland informs the army, that the commander of the forces has already sailed for England, and that his Lordship has undertaken this voyage from the most urgent political motives which highly interest the honor of Great Britain, and the prosperity of Sicily." The following passage the Lieutenant General aims directly at the court: "He (the General) is resolved to use his utmost means, to put an end to the system of *Espionage*, and of *treachery, which has been for so long a time*, and in a manner so notoriously practiced by persons of evil intentions and equally enemies of the *Sicilian people* and *the British*. He is resolved in consequence, to watch attentively persons of this description: and is determined from this time

forward, to bring before a council of war, those, whoever they may be, who shall be thus found holding communication with the enemy, and thus placing in danger the British army and this island." These expressions are very strong, but not more so than the fearful exigency of the moment required, as I am about to convince you.

Leaving my Lord William Bentinck, therefore, to be wafted to England in his Majesty's brig of war Cephalus, followed as he was by the hopes of the Sicilian public, it is necessary to inform you of the storm that had been gathering at the head quarters of Messina, previous to his arrival from England. When the impracticability of making any serious impression on Sicily from Calabria was seen in 1810, and Murat forced to relinquish the intended descent, it may well be supposed that the most poignant disappointment assailed the hearts of our enemies at Palermo, yet they were not be diverted by discomfiture, however great, from making every effort to accomplish their wishes. There was a formidable fleet at Toulon, which might, with the utmost facility, leave that port during the long winter nights, and passing through the straits of Bonafacio, reach the shores of this island in three or four days, an event said, and universally believed, to have been expected by the French party here; it was therefore of the utmost importance that on their side some steps should be taken to insure our destruction at Messina, as, if unmolested there, the success of

an invading army might be frustrated; for this purpose the emissaries of power who had been employed while Murat's army occupied the heights of Mele, were still continued in pay, and even increased to a very formidable number. Many of the first merchants in Messina having been gained over, a constant communication was kept up with Naples and the opposite shore, and, as appeared afterwards, a most systematic plan formed by the malcontents (amongst whom were several priests and Neapolitan officers of the first rank, particularly the Colonels Infante and Filippio, Captain Pandolfi, and many others, who held situations of great responsibility in the Sicilian naval and military departments,) to give up the citadel, forts, and English shipping to the enemy, who were to send an expedition from Naples and other places for the purpose of co-operating with the traitors; fortunately for us the whole plot was revealed by one of the party, towards the middle of December, upon which, a scene of treason, perfidy, and premeditated assassination came to light, worthy of the days of Catiline and Catherine de Medicis. No time was lost in seizing the ringleaders, who were immediately shut up in the citadel, when General Maitland took every necessary step for securing the public tranquillity. While these events were passing at Messina, our embassador had returned from England to Palermo in a frigate, after being absent only three months. On his Lordship's arrival the general expectation

was nearly as enthusiastic as it had been when he landed in Sicily the first time: there was not a Sicilian or English resident in the island who did not feel satisfied that the British government, feeling the gross insult offered to the nation at large by permitting our embassador to return home so abruptly without acceding to any one demand which he had been authorized to make on the part of his sovereign, and also keeping in mind the recent highly important discovery of there being a constant communication kept with Buonaparte and Murat,* would have resented such outrageous and ungrateful proceedings in the way which the laws of nations justified and a sense of national honour dictated; it was impossible to think otherwise without doing a great violence to one's own feelings upon so flagrant an occasion of retaliation; it was even generally conjectured, when Lord William's arrival at Cagliari, where he touched on his way out, was announced, that his Excellency would not think of landing at

* While at Messina a few months ago, I was positively informed that the correspondence between Buonaparte and Murat, and a certain party in this island, has been regularly intercepted during the last two years; but the most singular fact connected with this circumstance is, that instead of putting an end to such an intercourse, fac similes were only taken, and the originals forwarded to their destination. The seal and motto used by the French ruler and his partizans would serve for a better cause, it consists of a lyre, to which is added the motto of "Nous sommes d'accord."

Palermo, before he received the unconditional acquiescence of the court to the demands of our ministry. Many were heard to say, "Surely the period of our sufferings has at length arrived, and government can no longer suffer itself to be made the laughing-stock of all Europe, and the object of such general unpopularity for the sake of persons who have made such a base return for the reiterated and incessant favors of his Britannic Majesty. It cannot either be in the nature of things that this island, for the preservation of which so many millions have been expended, and a large army kept, will be suffered to fall into the hands of Buonaparte." This was exactly the popular sentiment, but it produced no effect on the measures of the day. Lord William landed at Palermo the very moment of his arrival, accompanied by General Macpharlane, and the people of Sicily were again destined to behold a tedious repetition of past scenes, by the recommencement of a diplomatic negotiation, equally as formal as any that had ever been witnessed in Sicily; and this too, at a time, when it was well known, that, in addition to the plot just discovered at Messina, there was another hatching at Palermo, and the French fleet from Toulon expected to sail for this island every moment. Providence, however, that so often interposes in the behalf of those whose own wisdom or exertion could not avert impending ruin, ordained that none of the designs projected by our enemies should be successfully executed; and

the sequel of this relation will prove, that it is to heaven alone we ought to attribute the result of things here up to the present period.

To convey an adequate idea of the innumerable intrigues, stratagems, and subterfuges, practised by the court party, from the day of Lord William's second arrival until the hereditary Prince's nomination, on the 19th of January, to be vicar-general, and long after, would require a large volume, and will doubtless form a very interesting one, on some future day. While, on our side, the former demands were reiterated daily, weeks elapsed before any concession whatever could be obtained. The first triumph of the English embassador, was that of procuring the recall of the exiled barons; those men who, vainly confiding in our protection and support, had nearly lost their lives, and been above eight months shut up in a dungeon amongst the worst sort of malefactors. Their reception by the inhabitants of Palermo, was such as all those experience who have espoused the cause of their country. But, as yet, very little had been done in the way of bringing the ultimate objects of Lord William's negotiation to a successful termination. His Sicilian Majesty, apparently indifferent to what was passing in his capital, could not be prevailed upon to visit Palermo, and continued at the Figuzza, about twenty-four miles off: while, on the other hand, the Queen seemed to possess the whole management of the state. I have already mentioned the great importance of

gaining time to her Majesty; this was still further corroborated on the awful discovery which was made to our embassador, in the early part of January. Before I relate the nature of this, it is necessary to return, for a short time, to the conspiracy at Messina. Immediately after its detection, the circumstance was, of course, formally reported to the King, who instantly issued a severe denunciation against the traitors, and directed that a military commission, composed of British and Neapolitan officers, should forthwith assemble for their trial; this did not, however, meet till the 4th of January; but when it did, and a few individuals were examined, there could be no longer the smallest doubt entertained by the public, upon a matter which was previously very well known to the commander of our forces at Messina, that of the whole plot having originated in a very high quarter, and been closely connected with a determination, not only to sacrifice the British army, but to deliver Sicily up to the French. A number of papers, and other documents, together with the Duke of Ascoli's private secretary, were said to have been seized: the former developing, in the most clear and unequivocal manner, all the projects and intentions of our adversaries. With respect to the sentence that may await the conspirators, there is scarcely any possibility of forming a correct judgment, at present, while the trials continue; but from the nature and importance of those further discoveries

of the authority upon which they acted, it is supposed that great lenity will be observed towards the whole of them.* One would imagine that the dis-

* Since writing the above this conjecture has been verified, as will appear by the general order, dated at Palermo, July 28th, 1812.

"At a council of war, held in the city of Messina, in the island of Sicily, on the 4th of January, 1812, and thence continued at different times to the 31st of the same month, the following individuals having been tried, the council sentenced them as follows; which sentences have been approved by the hereditary Prince.

"Don Pietro Veraci, to be imprisoned in the castle of one of the adjacent isles, during the term of his natural life.

"Dr. Francisco Santoro to pay a fine of 20,000 ounces, which sum is to remain at the disposition of Lord William Bentinck, *to be distributed to the poor of Sicily;* to be imprisoned seven years in the castle of Pantelaria, or some other of the adjacent isles; and then to be banished from Sicily for life; or in case the above fine should not be paid, to be imprisoned another seven years in the said castle.

"The Abbate Panucio, to be degraded from his sacred functions, and imprisoned in one of the castles of the adjacent islands for the space of seven years.

"The Abbate Minasi to be degraded from his sacred functions, and imprisoned in in one of the castles of the adjacent islands, for the space of seven years.

"Lieutenant Colonel Infante to be dismissed the service; and banished during the war to one of the adjacent islands.

"Captain Spadia Pandolfi to be ignominiously cashiered and imprisoned fifteen years in the castle of one of the adjacent isles.

"Gaetano Lo Faro to be sent to the gallies for the term of twenty-five years.

"Giovanni

covery at Messina, must have put an end to every future attempt of a similar description; it appears,

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"Giovanni Cassasso to be imprisoned in the castle of one of the adjacent isles during life.

"Pietro Soraci to be banished to one of the adjacent islands for the space of five years, or during the war.

"Colonel Constantino de Filippio to be publicly cashiered, and banished to one of the adjacent isles during the war.

"(Signed) P. Heron, M. Gen. and Pres.

"By order of his Excellency, the Commander of the Forces.

"(Signed) ——— Campbell, Ad. Gen."

An infinity of things might be said upon the preceding document; at present I shall content myself with observing, that should it have already been, or be hereafter proved that those deluded individuals were employed, to act as they did, by a superior authority, it will be a pity to let them suffer even the punishment awarded to them. If, on the contrary, they acted from their own free will, surely fine and imprisonment are hardly sufficient to compensate for the most foul and horrid treason. The consideration of this important subject is most strenuously and humbly submitted to the humane benevolence and justice of his Majesty's ministers.

Pietro Soraci I have known for many years: he is a native of Messina, of a very respectable family, and was always considered as warmly attached to our cause. In 1810, having previously been rather extravagant, he went to Malta, where I endeavoured, in vain, to procure a situation for him: those efforts were, of course, made on a conviction that he merited them.

I apprehend that many instances of disaffection might be traced to embarrassed circumstances; but I could never have believed Soraci capable of combining against the English, for whom I have so frequently heard him express so much attachment and veneration.—I beg to be excused for having thus thought of an old acquaintance.

however, to have produced a totally contrary effect, and even stimulated the enemies of the people and of Great Britain to new and more atrocious acts of aggression. Still confident in their hopes of certain assistance from Toulon, the whole of the Neapolitans, above thirty thousand, including troops and others, were organized for the execution of a particular enterprize: a general officer, remarkable for his revolutionary spirit, is said to have been employed to prepare the galley slaves (a favourite species of force with certain persons), in order that, on the appointed day, they might perform their part of the intended tragedy. The most singular part of this famous scheme remains to be communicated; a guillotine was constructed upon an improved plan, which could take off *five heads* at once!!! Fifty of the principal nobility are reported to have been destined as the first victims of this more than Robespierian machine; amongst others, the families of all those barons who had signed the representation against the one per cent. tax; or, in fact, any who had betrayed the smallest degree of patriotism or attachment to England. As to the extent to which the plan was intended to be carried, you may easily conceive, from the known views of those concerned, and the means adopted; nor is there any doubt, if attempted to be put into execution, but that another St. Bartholemew would have marked the page of Sicilian history. Every thing being prepared, and the very hour fixed, on

which the ministers of death were to execute their orders upon the defenceless inhabitants of Palermo, the mercy of Heaven was manifested, in a singular degree, to the people of Sicily and ourselves. The Marquis of C——, to whom the secret had been confided, it is not known by whom, recognized, before it was too late, the obligations of religion and humanity; there was not a moment to be lost; putting on the robes of his high office, and assuming the habit of a monk over them, he hastened to the hotel of Lord William, and being introduced to his study, communicated the horrible truth, in a manner the most affecting, and concluded by throwing off the outer garment, which instantly discovered to the minister, that he was not the dupe of an idle artifice. The whole of this truly singular circumstance bearing, as it certainly does, such an air of chimera and romance, will not be very readily credited; yet there is not an individual amongst the native Sicilians, who is not thoroughly convinced of its perfect veracity; indeed, I have not met a single countryman of our own that has ever attempted to deny any part of the above relation. But to proceed—no sooner had the business been revealed, but every precaution that could be taken, was, of course, adopted, and early next day our embassador determined to bring the troops, 6,000 of which had been already embarked on board the transports, at Milazzo, round to the capital. It would be difficult to describe the sensation created amongst

the people by the foregoing discovery. A general presentiment had inspired all classes of the community with alarm for some weeks; and this was amazingly increased by our unaccountable delay, in not bringing a body of troops to the capital. So strong was the conviction of the premeditated plan, that numbers of the Sicilians had even provided themselves with arms, which they kept in constant readiness. It excited the utmost wonder in the minds of every one, that any consideration on earth could have induced us to protract, or enter into negotiation, with people who had exhausted every means of insulting both the nation and ourselves. By this observation I do not intend to say, that the embassador has not acted throughout according to the strict tenor of his instructions; that has, however, nothing to do with the public opinion and recital of facts, both of which I am desirous of communicating with that degree of accuracy required by the importance of my subject. The public mind continued in a state of inexpressible perturbation, till the anxiously wished for arrival of our troops; this joyful event took place about the 7th of February; they were received by the whole population of Palermo, which assembled on the Marina for that purpose; every individual, whether noble or plebeian, felt that sort of pleasure at the sight, which a man who had been condemned to death would on hearing his reprieve announced. That the above is neither a forced nor exaggerated simile, every

Englishman who witnessed the scene will, I am sure, readily bear testimony.

The complicated variety of events which have been occurring around me during these last three months, render it quite impossible for me to give you a more methodical arrangement of circumstances; I shall, therefore, leave that part of the matter to your own judgment, and continue to notice various other facts, calculated to illustrate the nature of our politics, and the character of the government at the time of my departure.

In the early part of my narrative of occurrences, I omitted to observe, that in directing Lord William Bentinck to effect the wishes of his Majesty's government by the never-ending forms of a negotiation with the court of Sicily, so experienced in all the intricate windings of modern intrigue, the greatest task imaginable was imposed on his lordship; a task, indeed, to which it was scarcely possible to do justice. Independent of having to demand that the Sicilian troops should be placed at his disposal, it was necessary for him to provide for the island's defence, insist upon a change of ministry, assemblage of the parliament, and removal from the island of many Neapolitans, who were not to be reduced to obedience or any sense of moderation; to all of which requisitions innumerable obstacles were opposed. I really believe, that since his last arrival the embassador has had more personal fatigue, and greater difficulties to contend with, than any other ever expe-

rienced in so short a period. These circumstances are to be all taken into very serious consideration, and palliate a great number of things, which have, to some people, given an appearance of an over-strained moderation to his lordship's measures.

Resolved to be no longer trifled with, he proceeded express to the Figuzza, where the King had shut himself up since Lord William's return, a few days after the plot was discovered, and, in an audience with his Majesty, is said to have, in the most resolute and dignified manner, proposed the choice of two alternatives, hostility or peace; the former, if the wishes of the British nation were not instantly complied with, and the latter if they were. The instantaneous effect of this decision and firmness must have shewn *Lord William*, what a pity it was that the appeal had not been made long before; for in a few days afterwards, the Sovereign came to his capital, and made a number of new arrangements; and, although the singular way in which they were done proved an excessive degree of unwillingness, on the part of his Majesty, to conform to our propositions, the work of reform had commenced.

On the 19th of January, Lord William was appointed captain-general of the Sicilian army, by what is called a *Reale Dispaccio;* another of the same date created the Hereditary Prince vicar-general, and directed that his lordship should correspond with the secretary of state for the war and marine department, the *Marquis of Castellintini*,

one of the most devoted creatures of her Sicilian Majesty!—The same order required that his lordship should keep the General Fardella, head of the *Etat Major*, and the rest of that department under his orders. This latter document was thought remarkably degrading in the eyes of the Sicilians, who were very much annoyed to think, that in giving the British commander-in-chief the first privilege, it should have been thought necessary to bind his Excellency down in the above way. The last of these papers being very well worth preserving, I transmit a copy of it.*

In consequence of the many proofs which had recently come out, as to the conduct and views of the Duke of Ascoli, his immediate removal had been for some time insisted upon by Lord William, who, no doubt, made his excessive criminality appear evident to his Sicilian Majesty. The manner

* "The King having deigned to constitute a vicar-general in the kingdom of Sicily, Francis, his dear and affectionate son, with the full power of *alter ego*; and, in consequence of such appointment, his Royal Highness being exonerated from the command of the royal armies, his Majesty has resolved, and wills it, that from this day forward, that as to what may regard the movements, discipline, and organization of the troops, the Captain-general Lord William Bentinck is to *(debba)* hold constant communication with the royal secretary of state for war and marine, keeping under his immediate directions the quarter-master-general, Don G. B. Fardella, together with his whole staff.

(Signed) "CASTELLICINI, Secretary at War, &c."
Palermo, January 19th, 1812.

of removing this nobleman from his offices affords another most striking example of the King's great disinclination to execute justice; for when every body in Sicily expected that the part acted by the Duke for some years, but particularly in the recent affairs of Messina, &c. would have excited the resentment of his master, a *Reale Dispaccio* to the following effect was issued, bearing the very same date as our embassador's appointment to command the troops.

"The King, benignly yielding to the supplications of Camp Marshal the Duke of Ascoli, has consented to exempt him from all those military charges which he has hitherto exercised; and his Majesty, keeping in benign consideration his long and faithful services, has deigned to allow that he shall retain his actual uniform, and other honours of Camp Marshal. In the king's royal name,

(Signed) "CASTELLINTINI."

Palermo, January 19th, 1812.

Was there every any thing so truly singular and provoking? The man who had been detected in conspiring against the nation, and endeavouring to sacrifice the British army, to be treated in this way!—on the same day that Lord William Bentinck was appointed captain-general. You can easily figure to yourself the wonder excited by such a proceeding, and the sentiments of the public; but there are other, and, if possible, more extraordinary things to be related of the transactions of this period.

On the 18th of January two *Reale Dispaccios* were issued; the first confirming the Marquis St. Clair in the command of the reserve of the Sicilian army, and appointing him with full powers to inspect and direct the movements of the rifle corps, that of pioneers, and the three battalions of royal grenadiers. This order is worded in so strong a manner, that it seems to make the Marquis quite independent of Lord William Bentinck. The second dispatch appoints the Mareschal Prince Cátollica to be colonel general, and inspector of another regiment of royal guards and the corps of voltigeurs, said to be the reward of that Prince's distinguished merit, and important services rendered on that and every former occasion. Three other *Dispaccios*, issued on the 19th, appointed Major-general Macpharlane to be camp marshal *(marescial del campo)* and second in command of the Sicilian army; also the embassador's brother, Lord Frederick Bentinck, who is on our staff, to the rank of a lieutenant-general; the Duke of Orleans was by another appointed to a military command.

I have before hinted at the recall of the barons; it is now time to state more minutely the manner of concerting that business, and putting it into execution. As if the 19th of January had been a day of universal penance to his Sicilian Majesty, the order for restoring those meritorious individuals was published, together with those already mentioned; nothing of course was more natural

for the public than to expect persons, who had several months before been taken out of their beds,* and marched under a military escort to the vessel that was to convey them into banishment, for no other crime than that of expressing a wish to see the violated laws of their country fulfilled, should be also reinstated in some of those offices of which they were so unjustly deprived. It was, indeed, universally thought that the embassador had insisted upon their recall being published in a way calculated to heal their wounded feelings and those of the nation. It was even supposed that a new ministry, of which they were to form the chief part, would be instantly nominated. None of these hopes or anticipations were, however, realized: and *although, on their arrival* at Palermo, one after another, Belmonte, D'Aci,† and Villarmosa, were received with great enthusiasm by the people, it was in that alone their triumph consisted; and when the ebullition of popular

*. The arrest took place at midnight.

† Prince D'Aci, who had been confined at Ustica, was conveyed to Palermo in a brig of ours, and landed just at daylight at the Mole, to prevent his being congratulated by the populace! Belmonte and Villarmosa, being confined at Favignano, were landed at Trapani, and met by a large concourse of the nobility and gentry of Palermo at Partanico; from Mon Reale into the capital an immense number of the populace joined the procession, and made the air resound with their acclamations. The sight could not have been very gratifying to her Majesty, whose new residence at Mezzo Mon Reale, the whole assemblage passed.

favour subsided, they were left, like so many culprits, to reflect on their past sufferings. The order of his Sicilian Majesty for their liberation must have tended still more to hurt their feelings: it is worthy of being preserved, and speaks for itself—

"His Majesty has commanded that Prince Belmonte and Prince Villarmosa, *detained* in Favignana, and Prince Petrulla, *detained* in Maretimo, and Prince D'Aci, *detained* in Ustica, shall be set at liberty, and Prince Villa Franca, who had been removed from Pantellaria to Termini,* is at liberty to return to Palermo, and go wherever he likes.

(Signed) "ORAZIA ANTONIO CAPPELLI."

Palermo, Jan. 19, 1812.

You will confess that the above document could not well be couched in more laconic terms; but observe the signature—Mr. Castellintini would not put his name to the recal of the barons, but employs Cappelli to do so, an under secretary, and devoted minion of the court. The return of the barons to Palermo might have been rendered an important event in the history of Sicily, and even led to a total change in that of the Mediterranean; but, like many other opportunities, it was suffered to pass, without being a source of advantage to the island or ourselves.

I forgot to inform you, that her Sicilian Ma-

* See Biographical Sketches.

jesty, *tired* of state affairs, had withdrawn, in the early part of January, from the royal palace at Palermo, to a house half way on the road to Mon Reale, a few miles from Palermo. The transactions at this residence soon proved that her removal did not in the least diminish that great influence hitherto practised by her Majesty. The communication with Murat was more active than ever; I have myself known couriers to embark at the mole of Palermo for Naples; several officers, natives of that kingdom, tendered their resignation, pretending that they wished to return to their own country; among the rest, a person, by the name of Simoneschi, departed from the capital in February, charged with very important dispatches; in the course of the same month, a person was landed from a boat near Cefalu, and soon after taken, upon suspicion of being a spy, by the people; several large packets were found on him, which were seized, and, together with himself, sent under an escort to Messina. The latter circumstance was soon made public, and excited a most powerful sensation, particularly when it was found that he had come from the head of the Neapolitan government, and that all his papers were addressed to the highest authorities in this island. Without inflicting any punishment on the man, his Excellency Lord William Bentinck gave him up to the court, on a promise from it that justice should be done. Will you believe me, that he was suffered to remain unpunished; besides the foregoing, a

nightly council used to assemble at Mezzo Mon Reale, composed of Tomasi, Canose, Ferari, Pasqualina, Moliterno, St. Clair, Artale, Brisac, Finsechiano, Parisi, Del Bono, Caltanissetta, Troisi, Cupani, Castrone, Sciuri, Fitalia, Cuto. Carini, the Archbishop Mormilli, Bishops Morroc and Serio, the Abbate Mileno, and others, for purposes best known to themselves, but of which the public were by no means ignorant.

Large sums of money were appropriated to services that had no relation whatever to the interests of Sicily or Great Britain: in the course of about three weeks 7000 ounces were taken from the funds of the *Contada di Modica* by the order of Del Bono, the president; Artale is said to have, in fifteen days, signed drafts on the treasury for no less than 30,000 ounces; this was taken from confiscated property, and what they call here *Cento a Parti*, which the Sicilians do not understand the meaning of. Tomasi, minister of finance, and Ferari, also contributed very largely. In order to give a colour to these proceedings, and encourage Lord William in a belief that there was an intention, on the part of the Sicilian cabinet, to cooperate in his views, Mr. Castrone's boats were given up, and transferred, or rather sold, to a person called Ruiz, who had just been appointed a superintendant of external police under a new board, created for the purpose of preventing the introduction of any spies, and, in fact, to counteract the designs of the evil-disposed. Who should

be placed at the head of this department, called *Alta Palizia*, but Artale! this extraordinary fact may show you how far it could be of any use. The mode of communicating with the enemy was also changed at this period; letters were now sent to the southern coast of the island, and embarked there for Calabria; they were, however, occasionally sent to Strombolo, where persons have been kept all the war for purposes of espionage.*

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* Amongst the various other means of endeavouring to render the English unpopular, religion has been resorted to in a way that requires particular notice, as a recurrence of it should be, if possible, avoided, or at least counteracted. Those who, under a certain high authority, have principally distinguished themselves in this department of politics are, Fillipone, Mormille, and Serio, all bishops; the inferior agents being numberless, and found in different parts of the island. At Palermo, the Padre Clemente, Milano, Cacamo, and Macchia, are well known to be very active in stirring up the people against us; the last named, so late as the 24th of this month (March), preached a long sermon in the church of San Giovanni, inculcating, in the strongest terms, the necessity of implicit obedience, in the present crisis, to the will of the King and Queen; that not to assist them in extirpating the English heretics, a people without religion or charity, was a deadly sin against Heaven. Addressing himself more directly to the Neapolitan part of the congregation, he exclaimed, "And you, Neapolitans, the true sons and experienced favourites of the court, I recommend you to do every thing in its defence, and to die, if necessary, with arms in your hands!"

The Abbate Candelora, professor of civil law in the university, has also converted his lectures from legislative into political subjects; one of his exhortations tended to convince the students

Notwithstanding the nomination of the hereditary prince to be vicar-general, he did not begin to take the smallest part in public affairs till towards the middle of February; and, in the mean time, every effort on the embassador's part to make a change in the ministry was violently resisted by the King, who still continued to direct matters in concert with her Majesty; and even kept Ascoli at the Figuzza, while Castrone continued in his situation at the police office. When the vicar-general entered into the functions of office, you may consider that his situation could not be very enviable; for he had not only the commands of filial authority to obey, but those requisitions

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that there was no wish of the court, however extravagant or unlawful, but they ought to obey.

In the beginning of this month, about the fifth I think, while passing a church, I observed a large printed paper attached to the door, with an eagle, the emblem of Palermo, and a ribbon with S. P. Q. P. engraved on it. Examining the document more attentively, I perceived the following title at the head: *Orazione per le quarant' ore di questa Citta,* alluding to the prayers proper for a celebrated fast in Lent. The first article ran thus,—"To pray for the exaltation of the holy church, *and its wants.*" The second,—"To pray for the holy apostolical chair." The third,—"To pray for the union of all *christian* princes." And the fourth,—"*To pray for the extirpation of heresy!*" About ten more heads of prayer follow. Watching a favorable moment, when no person was passing, I was sacrilegious enough to take the curious document down, put it into my pocket, and return home with the pious theft, which shall be preserved as a precious specimen of religious toleration in Europe at the commencement of the year 1812!

which Lord Wm. Bentinck found it necessary to be continually making. The first disposition made towards a new administration was in the latter end of February; when, to the astonishment of every one in Palermo, the following list was circulated, as having been selected by the King himself:

Castellintini to continue as Minister of War.
Prince Pantellaria, as Counsellor of State, Privy Counsellor.
Prince Partanna, Do. ——— Do. ———
Marquis Tomasi, Do. ——— already Minister of Finance.
Prince Catollica, Do. ——— Do. ———
Prince Cuto, Do. ——— Do. ———
&c. &c.

It was fully expected that these, and some others from the same party, would be immediately appointed to supply the place of those who were destined to be removed. This event did not, however, take place; and the above month, together with the greater part of March, was passed in nothing but the most rancorous political broils and court intrigue. Adhering to the hopes of assistance from without, the partizans of our enemies would not yield a particle of their power. Several regiments had been actually marched into Lower Calabria; the French fleet was positively to sail in March; the Neapolitans still continued in Palermo, with the exception of those sent to replace our garrisons that had been withdrawn from Milazzo and Trapani, and many thousands were known to possess arms. Things were naturally in a state of peculiar embarrassment while

suffered to remain in this indecisive way. At length it was determined, that another strong appeal should be made to the feelings and good sense of his Majesty. This seemed to produce a considerable effect. He at length consented to part from his dear friend Ascoli; who took a most affecting farewell of his Majesty, in which both are said to have *shed tears*, and was embarked on board a transport at Palermo, March 13th, to be conveyed to Cagliari. The Duke, determined to be constant, even in misfortune, took Donna Flavia, already mentioned in the sketch of his life, with him; in order that, having shared his fate in better times, she should also participate in his adversity! His Excellency was also accompanied by two aides du camp, and a great many attendants: in fact, his departure had infinitely more the appearance of a summer excursion, than that of a man who had betrayed the interests of his prince, those of this island, and of humanity at large. The transport sailed the next day, convoyed by his Majesty's ship Comus, which also received on board Mr. Hill, the embassador to that court, and who had come to Palermo upon some diplomatic affairs a short time before. Upon the departure of Ascoli and his associates, a correspondent of mine, long resident in the Sicilian capital, makes the following emphatical observation: "So much rubbish is removed from the dung-hill, but enough still remains to fill the mephitic atmosphere with contagion, abomination, and death!"

During the interval which elapsed between the hereditary Prince's appointment to be vicar-general, and the change of ministry, the court party did not for a moment despair of ultimate success: one personage, in particular, was often heard to exclaim, "*Non sono morta ancora;*" and the Neapolitans, in addressing their friends, observed, "*Avete pasienza altri due mesi.*" The Sicilians, on the other hand, did not fail to circulate a variety of odd sayings, reflecting upon our indecisive and unaccountable tardiness: the little boys in the streets used to say, "Wait a little, every thing will be done bye and bye!" The sayings of the mobility were much more sarcastic. Alluding to Lord William's return home, the following pointed expression was in the mouth of every one: "*Iste benisti, e casa facesti?*" The country people, also, made use of another curious expression, "*Mastru di cappella è novu, ma la mušica è la stissa.*" These things are important, as far as they shew that the people, in every country, have their notions of political propriety; and those of such a nature, in general, as to accord with the soundest policy.

While yet in the midst of discord, hostility, and contention, and the public voice was expressed in a manner by no means favorable to any of the parties in power, the long wished for change was announced on the 28th March; when the following nominations for a new ministry were reported to have taken place:

Prince Cassaro, *Grazia e Justizia*, interior, with Orazio Antonio Cappelli for his secretary.

Prince Villarmosa, *Casa Reale e Azienda*, finance, with Don Cesarino Iroildi for his secretary.

Prince Belmonte, *Affari Esteri*, foreign affairs, with the Duke di Terra di Falco for his secretary.

Prince d'Aci, *Guerra e Marina*, with Don Emanuele Requesens, as military secretary, and the Cav. Settimo, as the naval one.

Serratti, *de la Maison Royale*, household.

Upon the foregoing appointments it is necessary to offer you a few remarks; their future conduct will prove how justly they are applied to the respective parties. The politics of Prince Cassaro have long been called of an amphibious nature by the best judges in Palermo. When very lately a council was assembled for the purpose of deciding whether the Neapolitans should be sent away according to the formal requisition to that effect made by Lord W. Bentinck, this nobleman is positively said to have voted with Butera, Pantellaria, Fitalia, and Partanna, for their continuance in the island; and, although his name is not included in the nightly council, I have been informed, upon very good authority, that he has frequently attended her Majesty since her retreat to Mezzo Mon Reale. His continuing to retain Cappelli as secretary, is another very curious circumstance. Upon the whole, the appointment of Prince Cassaro, with all his splendid talents, has been very coldly received by the people.

To the nomination of Villarmosa, and his secretary, I have heard no objection whatever; on the contrary, the public anticipate that the finances will soon be placed on a respectable footing by Prince V., who is also said to be better calculated for that office than any other man in Sicily.

Belmonte has the best possible claim to his appointment, that of the universal suffrage of the people. His secretary is a young man of the most promising talents and amiable manners: his mother is, however, a Milanese lady; and he has a considerable property in that country.

D'Aci, nearly as popular as Belmonte, is equally fit for the situation he is destined to fill. The choice made in selecting his two secretaries affords a still greater proof of this nobleman's patriotic intentions. The Cavalier Requesens is an enlightened, impartial, and independent gentleman; the steady friend of his country. Cavalier Settimo, a naval officer of distinction, has signalized himself on several occasions; but more particularly in the command of a large division of gun-boats at Messina, when Murat intended to invade Sicily, in 1810.

Serratti, formerly minister to the Duke of Tuscany, is an old Florentine. To know his principles, you should read Mr. Leckie's account of this island: one of that writer's observations runs as follows: "Two persons have the chief control of her (the Queen's) councils. The first is an

emigrant (Brisac), who has a wife in Paris, with whom he corresponds: this man is the tool of another designing Frenchman,* enjoys great influence at court, and is in every respect inimical to the British interests. Circello is thus devoted to the Queen, though he has apparently been chosen contrary to her wishes; and the facility with which he entered into office, while the choice of Prince ———† to succeed Serratti was obstinately refused, shews that her Majesty was at the bottom of the whole affair, and that the whole was a contrivance to amuse Mr. Drummond. Serratti is entirely in the French interest," &c.

The ministers have not yet‡ assumed their active functions; when they do, let us hope that a new and more prosperous era than any hitherto experienced by the inhabitants of Sicily in modern times, will mark the commencement and progress of their administration.

Previous to my closing this narrative, I have one more circumstance to relate. The non-arrival of any of the promised succours; and, in fact, the failure of every plan devised for our being driven from the island, has, naturally enough, thrown the enemies of Sicily and England into the utmost despair; but so deeply has the love of power and desire to intrigue predominated in the breast of one personage, that, with all the affectation of

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* St. Clair, I suppose. † Belmonte, I presume.

‡ March 20, 1812.

retirement manifested during these five weeks past, the person alluded to has persisted in a variety of practices far from being creditable, or conducive to the common interest. The subsidy that had been kept back was advanced again soon after the arrival of our troops, and a considerable part of it allotted for the use of the above person, who has for some time pleaded the greatest poverty.* But our money has, unhappily, been but too often given to people who have made an instrument of it to cut our throats, to use a vulgar though strong expression. This has been singularly exemplified in our relations with Sicily. But to return—seeing that nothing but the most energetic measures would produce any effect, the embassador contrived to have two very long interviews with this personage. In one of these, which lasted above three hours, his lordship is said to have expressed himself precisely to this effect: "Divesting himself of all official character, for the moment, he, as a sincere friend, would advise her M—— to retire from the neighbourhood of Palermo, *and even*

* From every thing that has happened in Sicily since the arrival of Lord Wm. Bentinck, it is scarcely necessary to say, that his lordship is by no means a favorite with her Sicilian Majesty. Indeed, I am confidently informed, that she sometimes indulges in the most violent paroxysms of wrath against him. When yielding to her Majesty's wishes, in a very recent instance, by consenting to let her have a few thousand ounces, she positively refused to take it from him, and required that it should come from another hand; to which, I believe, the embassador consented.

from Sicily, because such *extraordinary additional information* and circumstances had come to his knowledge, and which he must necessarily transmit to his government, as would certainly be productive of results that would be painful for him to communicate to her M——, and which nothing but her departure can prevent." If the foregoing was not said by the embassador in person, it was at least written to the high personage alluded to. The answer to his lordship was that of requiring time to take his request into consideration; and, at all events, nothing could be done till after the accouchement of the Duchess of Orleans. This was, undoubtedly, a humiliating event for a person of such exalted rank in society to sustain; and when not considered with relation to the necessity that stimulated the request of Lord William, calculated to excite no small share of sympathy. But the facts I have already related were too fresh in the public mind to admit of commiseration; and the general wish has seconded the efforts of Lord William.

The period proposed for my departure from this island being close at hand, I shall conclude my account of Sicilian events up to the end of March by observing, that there are a thousand little facts omitted in the preceding relation, from a fear of being too prolix; and which, however much they might tend to illustrate the character of the court and various individuals here, would, most proba-

bly, fatigue your attention too much to be gratifying. In the hope, therefore, that enough has been recorded to convey a tolerable knowledge of what has taken place during the present and last war, it only remains for me to offer a few observations upon what our policy has hitherto been with respect to Sicily, and that which reason and justice require it should be in future.

There are many political writers of the present day, who could doubtless compose a volume upon the events recorded in the preceding part of this letter; it will, however, be my study to contract what I have further to add, into the smallest compass possible, leaving you, as in many former instances, to draw those numberless inferences which a reflecting mind never fails to do in the course of its studies. In looking back upon the history of our relations with the court of Naples, the attention naturally fixes on the most prominent features of the connection that has existed for so long a period between the two countries; these, for the sake of brevity, I am about to consider under three distinct heads, although they branch out into a much greater variety of subordinate ones. The first to be discussed, are the benefits we have conferred on his Sicilian Majesty; secondly, the manner in which his Britannic Majesty's generosity has been requited; thirdly, the errors of our policy in general towards the court of Sicily.

Although, as already observed, a community of interests, to which all treaties of alliance ought to owe their origin, was the cause of such ties of amity between the kings of England and Naples soon after the French revolution, there can scarcely be any parallel drawn up as to the side most favored by the new connection: it was no doubt highly important for us to increase the number of our friends on the rupture with France in 1793; but the relative position of Naples with England, was not then, nor has it been at any subsequent period, such as to make either her hostility or friendship a matter of very great importance to Great Britain. The manner in which his Neapolitan Majesty commenced the war, notwithstanding his ample means, without energy or inclination, was more than sufficient to prove that we had nothing to expect from such an ally, in the way of effectual assistance; on the contrary, had the British ministry of that eventful period, shown more discrimation in the selection of friends, it is more than probable that, on penetrating the real character and views of the Neapolitan court, they would have pursued a very different course from what they did. It was, however, in this part of our political history, as in others of equal consequence, destined otherwise, and our conduct towards Ferdinand the Fourth might be compared to that of Falstaff, when employed to enlist volunteers before the battle of

Shrewsbury;* for all who ranged themselves under our banner were admitted, no matter what their pretensions. There is, perhaps, no part of our foreign policy so much to be lamented, as this credulous disposition to adopt friends without duly estimating their value; if such a failing is ruinous in private life, how infinitely more so must it be to nations, where, instead of an individual suffering, the inconvenience it creates is felt by millions. There is, I firmly believe, no possibility of calculating what we have lost both in strength and popularity, by the choice and adherence to faithless allies; whilst other nations, whose friendship ought to have been preserved almost at any price except that of national honor, have been frequently forced to become our enemies. It is not my intention positively to assert that those errors of our cabinet have ever originated in vicious principles: it has repeatedly acted from the impulse of generosity, while on other occasions, motives of ambition, natural to the members of every government, have prompted the exertions of British power in favor of those who had no legitimate claim on our support or attachment.

* I apprehend the politics of Shakspeare have never been properly appreciated by the statesmen of more modern times. Would it not be extremely difficult to find any thing more applicable to the present subject than the following?

Shallow. Do you like him, Sir John?

Falstaff. Shadow will serve for summer—prick him;

——for we have a number of shadows to fill up the muster book! *Hen. IV, Part II.*

This subject is susceptible of so many arguments, and such diversified amplification, that I dread to enter into it more at length, confident, in the first place, that its proper treatment requires more power of reasoning than I possess, and in the next, fearing lest I should be led too far away from the immediate object in view. Having, if I may be permitted to use the expression, enlisted the king of Naples in the grand cause of restoring the Bourbons, his own near relations, we proceeded hand in hand to fulfil the object of our mutual wishes. Confining myself to the conduct of England, she raised a large army, invaded the enemy's country, and captured his colonies: her fleets soon covered the ocean: and in the Mediterranean, both Sicily and Elba were saved from those attacks which would have doubtless been made in the absence of our ships. Persevering in the contest long after the defeat of some of our allies and the desertion of others, we never for a moment lost sight of his Neapolitan Majesty's interests, although by the peace of 1798, he was placed amongst the above number. When, from a combination of curious circumstances, in which Great Britain had no share, Ferdinand was driven from his capital in 1799, his first asylum was an English ship of war bearing the flag of Lord Nelson, who conveyed his Majesty's treasures and family to Sicily, an island that had hitherto been protected from a French yoke by the vigilance and bravery of our navy: here the royal party were land-

ed, and in less than twelve months after re-embarked on board another British ship for the purpose of being placed on the throne they had lost. Arriving in the bay of Naples, who did his Neapolitan Majesty find there? the hero of the Nile and a large fleet under his command, many ships of which had been principally instrumental in driving the French out of the kingdom. Leaving him in quiet possession of his capital and country, the fleet of his Britanic Majesty departed in search of new triumphs.

In 1801, and while England was vigorously occupied in prosecuting the war, we suffered the king of Naples to enter into a separate negotiation, and are even said to have strongly recommended the measure; so anxiously did the ministry wish to preserve his Neapolitan Majesty from further annoyance. When the delusive peace of Amiens was concluded, the eleventh article expressly stipulated that the French troops should be withdrawn from the kingdom of Naples. Scarcely had the people of England breathed, for a few short months, from the toils of a sanguinary war, when the liberties of Europe and mankind were again assailed by the continental tyrant. Ever ready at her post, in the hour of danger, Great Britain drew the sword once more, fully as much in the cause of Naples as her own; yet Naples saw the event with stoical indifference; the devoted inhabitants were labouring under a degree of oppression which rendered useful exertion impossible, and with

a competent revenue the government only sought how to avoid the call of honor and of glory. Without any intention of justifying our conduct in landing an army at Naples in 1805, by which the faith of a recent treaty was violated, or withdrawing them again without having commenced operations against the enemy, the wishes at last of our government were, I trust, then, as at every former period, directed to the well-being of his Neapolitan Majesty. On the re-embarkation of Sir James Craig, he proceeded to Messina, by the request of his Neapolitan Majesty; to prevent this *dernier* resource also from sharing the fate of Naples,* in which case Buonaparte's threat after the peace of Presbourg would have been really fulfilled; but the immediate grant of a large subsidy which was soon doubled, together with those innumerable acts of forbearance and liberality that have marked our subsequent conduct, and which have been already noticed in the foregoing narrative, exhibits a scene of more than paternal affection on one side, and unnatural ingratitude on

* I have been frequently informed, that a very great difference of opinion existed in the Neapolitan cabinet, as to whether Russia or England should be invited to occupy Messina at the above period: the advice of Sir John Acton prevailed, however, against that of a high authority, said to have been decidedly hostile to our army landing in this island. This curious circumstance is given as communicated to me, without vouching for its authenticity, although for my own part I have no hesitation whatever in believing such to have been the fact.

the other, that has scarcely, if ever, been realized in the history of the world, whether ancient or modern.

The second object of inquiry will not occupy much of your time. The return we have experienced from his Sicilian Majesty's government, whether at Naples or in this island, has been uniformly the same, and is to be seen in the inactivity of its co-operation from 1793 till the truce with Buonaparte in 1798, while torrents of British blood flowed at the new altar of regular government and social order. It is to be seen in the conduct of Naples, when the present war broke out, and until 1805, when the only way of atoning to us for the past seemed to be that of sanctioning the violation of a solemn treaty, which, though entered into with the enemy of Europe was not the less binding. Need I direct your looking for the return of our sovereign's unbounded generosity, in a retrospective view of those events recorded in the other parts of this communication? they surely speak for themselves, and appeal more powerfully to the heart and understanding than the most eloquent language. Upon this point I shall not trouble you with any other remark, except to observe, that if any circumstances in the relations of two states, could justify the interference of one of them in the concerns of the other, the conduct of England to the court of Naples and Sicily during a period of nineteen years, is most unquestionably of the latter description.

The third point of discussion is of more importance than the two foregoing, and embraces a much greater variety of objects, upon some of which I now beg leave to offer you a few observations, with the utmost deference, however, to your better judgment. It is extremely remarkable, that all those who have latterly ventured to express their opinions with any freedom upon political subjects, invariably disapprove of the foreign policy of Great Britain. It is, I fear, equally true, that experience has confirmed their sentiments upon the existing defects in the vital part of the government of every country; and from that total want of success produced by such general disapprobation, it would appear that some people are not as yet impressed with a due sense of the incalculably high importance attached to the conduct of a great nation to other states, and particularly that portion of it which relates to diplomacy in general. When we consider that the national character of a people, their power, and its durability depend chiefly on the opinion of their neighbours, the importance of this subject becomes self-evident, and it is then that too much cannot well be said in its perfect elucidation; for we have at length acknowledged, that, although in the progress of discovering truth, some harsh and melancholy facts are of necessity disclosed, yet the government itself and community at large, are eventually benefited. The foreign relations of a country naturally divide themselves into

two parts, its general views, and the selection of those who are destined to carry those views into effect. With respect to the former, and to save you the labour of wading through the numberless writers upon the laws of nations, does not common sense dictate, that they should be founded on the basis of strict justice, having for their object, no less the happiness of ourselves than that of others, and unsullied by the crime of ambition, be only calculated to promote the true interests of mankind? these should, I presume, be the objects of every civilized state in its conduct towards others, and however much the practice of these days are in opposition to the assertion, it will, I apprehend, be confirmed by the sanction of religion and morality. The second division points out that all those who are deputed to represent the person of their sovereign, should be not only men of unimpeachable integrity, but possessed of talents likely to raise the character of their country in the estimation of others, and insure the success of their undertakings.*

I am sorry to be under the necessity of acknowledging that, with the exception of Sparta and Corinth amongst the nations of antiquity, and

* Modern diplomatists would do well to study the poet's idea of the qualifications that constituted an embassador in former days.

Vox regum, lingua salutis,
Fœderis orator, pacis via,
Semen amicitiæ, belli fuga, *litibus hostis.*

the Chinese in modern times, there does not appear to have existed any government that has acted upon a part of those principles which, according to my presumption, should be their unerring guides in all transactions with foreign states.

In paying so very high a compliment to the Chinese state, it is but justice to add, that while motives of the purest virtue animated the former, those of the latter might be traced to an infinitely less praise worthy source, although its jealousy of strangers and other prejudices do not interfere with that love of peace and unambitious character, which it has so miraculously preserved since the remotest period of its foundation; virtues that render the fate of those who possess them amiable, and undoubtedly place China, with all its other defects, far above most nations in point of domestic happiness and tranquillity. If we have to lament that ruinous mixture of selfishness, pride, and ambition, which characterizes the nations of modern Europe, and that has for so many centuries made war and bloodshed their only pursuit, it is gratifying to reflect, that independent of what the ancients used to effect through the medium of negotiation, our own history has also furnished many memorable proofs of transcendant abilities in the same department of the art of governing; and although, like the revolution of a comet, the instances are rare, we often recollect with exultation the Walsinghams,

Temples, Marlboroughs, and Stairs, of other times, and even cherish a hope that similar characters will yet grace the page of our future annals. How many bloodless triumphs have not such men obtained for their country? what sanguinary wars and enterprizes has not their persuasive wisdom averted? and how did the character of Englishmen resound through admiring Europe while they lived? if those envied days are suspended, the memory of such men ought not to be held less dear to patriotism and virtue, while their example is upon record to stimulate posterity. In paying this short tribute of applause to the ornaments of our country, as they were the just pride of humanity, I do not wish it to be thought that any immediate censure is thrown upon the *corps diplomatique* of the present day; on the contrary, I honor it for rank, virtue, and fortune: but to flatter any set of men at the expense of truth and common sense is as foreign to my character, as it would be derogatory to the task I have undertaken. The few remaining observations which I have to add upon this matter, will, therefore, be given with that degree of candour required by the extreme importance of such a subject. At present there is nothing more common with those who regret the frequent want of success experienced by our diplomatists at the different courts of Europe, than the concluding their remarks by a panegyric on the superiority of talent displayed by those of France, which has,

indeed of late years, become proverbial; this is, I confess, extremely humiliating on our side, and of itself more than sufficient to cause that sort of enquiry, by which we can alone hope to regain our character as able negotiators, a quality that should ever be inseparable from a great civilized power. To say that our native genius, education, or acquirements, were inferior to those of our rival, would not only be a national insult, but in direct opposition to reason; those who have studied the character of the two nations, and are unbiassed by prejudices of birth, freely acknowledge that England and France have long kept an equal pace in the progress of arts, sciences, and literature; if they differ, it is principally in their civil and political institutions, upon the perfection of which the power and happiness of every state must depend. Here I could willingly give way to my feelings, by an expression of gratitude to Heaven for that constitution which has enabled our beloved country to stem the torrent of anarchy and revolution that has so often bore down other states, and sealed their ruin; a constitution which, if restored to pristine purity, will for ever avert the ages of darkness which succeeded the glorious days of Solon, Lycurgus, and Numa Pompilius; and which, notwithstanding the inevitable rust of time that hangs upon it, is still a most admirable monument of human wisdom. This would be a theme for many pages, but I cannot depart too widely from

my subject, and therefore leave you to anticipate the rest.

If, however, we boast an envied superiority over France and every other country on the score of civil liberty, there is no person who will not allow the former a singular pre-eminence in that part of the political system which relates to diplomacy: the experience of nearly twenty years affords innumerable proofs of this important truth; in fact, it is so universally impressed on the minds of our best politicians, that to cite particular instances of our diplomatic errors, would be only to awaken recollections of the most painful nature, and as my present object is merely to point out that our want of success is not in the means but in their application, you will readily dispense with invidious allusions, in the place of which I intend to supply you with a few hints, drawn from actual observation, and a close reference to late events in this part of the world.

Any one who has had the least opportunity of becoming acquainted with the people of Italy, must know that they are distinguished above all other Europeans for ingenuity and acuteness of thinking, to which a singularly happy address is frequently added; these native qualities, together with their insuperable and well known dissimulation, fit them in a peculiar manner for the modern art of negotiation. Fully aware of such advantages, the court of Naples availed itself not only of the resources found in Italy, but united

the imported talents of England, France, and Germany, to the *corps diplomatique*, which accounts for the character it has possessed ever since the marriage of Ferdinand to her present Majesty, whose own abilities in the same department even exceed all those who have been honored with her confidence. With a proverbial character for infinite cunning and calm ingenuity, can it be a matter of surprize, that the Sicilian court has for so many years imposed on the credulity of nearly every sovereign in Europe. To counteract the various subterfuges, intrigues, and machinations, that have been incessantly resorted to, would have required complicated and stupendous talents; nor do I believe that any thing but force of arms should ever have been opposed to such a premeditated system of fraud, deception, and ingratitude. If, however, it was the determination of the British government to live on terms of harmony with people of this description, the utmost precaution should have been adopted in the appointment of persons to reside amongst them, whose experience and talents might, in some degree, be a counterpoise to their cupidity. The necessity of this measure has been most strangely overlooked; Sir W. Hamilton, for whose literary talents and classical endowments I entertain the most profound respect, was our envoy at Naples for above thirty-five years; his celebrated work on Etruscan Vases must have, in the course of that period, long as it was,

occupied an amazing proportion of his time, independent of those various other analogous pursuits which attract the attention of a scholar in such a country; this observation is offered without any intention of impeaching the zeal or talents of Sir William, but merely to prove that his official situation and private views could not accord perfectly with each other under such circumstances. The peaceable nature of the times until 1793, made it of little consequence who represented our sovereign before the above period, but on the revolution breaking out, a formidable and energetic legation sent to Naples might have produced the most beneficial effects on the people and government, and could not, at least, make things worse than they have been; this step was, however, not thought of, and I can almost venture to add, that no change whatever took place in our mode of stimulating the court of Ferdinand, till the peace of Amiens. Our apathy was, on the other hand, taken ample advantage of by the enemy, and the influence of several Frenchmen and Germans employed in the first offices, whose principles and patriotism were extremely doubtful, gives but too much reason to believe, that our interests were often sacrificed either to the resentment or jealousy of some other power. Upon this subject I have every reason to lay particular stress from a variety of circumstances communicated to me at Naples, in 1805.

Upon Sir William's return to England, in 1802, Mr. Elliot succeeded him, and remained with the court till its return to Palermo. As to the vigor or success of that gentleman's diplomatic labours, I am not prepared to give an opinion, and only know that his situation was occupied by Mr. Drummond, now Sir William, in 1806. The events which occurred here during the short preiod of his embassy, together with Mr. Leckie's spirited correspondence,* seem to indicate that his powers were totally inadequate to the execution of any decisive arrangements with the court of Sicily. Leaving the island in 1808, where a longer continuance must have been very irksome to his feelings and wishes, his successor, Lord Amherst, arrived in 1810, and remained like his predecessor to witness every species of iniquity and insult till April, 1811, when his lordship departed for England, leaving Mr. Douglas, who had accompanied him out, as secretary of legation to conduct matters with the court, at by far the most critical period of our relations with his Sicilian Majesty since the two courts were on terms of amity; and things continued in a most agitated state until the arrival of Lord William Bentinck, June, 1811. Before I leave this subject, it is necessary to inform you that it has been customary for every new embassador to bring out a fresh secretary of legation, an appointment to

* See Historical Survey.

which there is a very handsome salary attached: and, as appears from what I have related, the person filling this office has been called upon to execute the functions of our embassadors, during the most difficult epochs of his Britannic Majesty's relation with this court. I will put it to your candor and good sense, whether this mode of nominating an embassy almost every year to such a court, and selecting persons generally inexperienced in diplomacy, but invariably unacquainted with the court of Sicily, to compose it, was likely to produce any favorable consequences? Passing over a number of other circumstances which are omitted from motives of personal delicacy to those concerned, I have not the smallest hesitation in giving it as my opinion, that the greatest part of those indignities and annoyances experienced by the British government from that of his Sicilian Majesty, have originated in the numerous imperfections and defects of our diplomatic system.

To have followed the foregoing topics into all those arguments and intricacies of reasoning which their more perfect illustration would have required, was more than I felt myself justified in attempting; as it is, I fear you will think what I have said foreign to the original intention of this letter. Claiming your indulgence, while I cannot help calling your attention in the most earnest manner to points of such vital importance to the future interests of the country, it now

remains for me to enter into the ulterior objects of this communication, that of giving you a short account of the state of parties and general feelings of the people, after which I shall conclude with a few detached ideas upon that line of policy we might pursue towards Sicily with more chance of success than any hitherto adopted.

In reviewing the page of history it would appear that human nature has been the same in every age, exhibiting alternate shades of virtue and vice. Man has ever been the slave of passion, when not restrained by law, example, and education. Impulses of virtue have been by many attributed to our nature, and we doubtless imbibe them from Heaven, but a slight examination of the savage state, proves how ineffectual they are if not directed by the above auxiliaries. Even in the most civilized periods we retain all the imperfections of our nature, and that spirit of war, ambition, and want of unanimity, which has always distinguished the nations of the earth, leaves us no room to hope that the destinies of humanity will ever be altered. Under an impression of this sort, it behoves the friend of his fellow creatures, in submitting to the common lot of mankind, to develope as much as possible the causes which lead the members of the same community astray and divert them from a sense of their real interests, to those which can only lead to ruin and disappointment. Of all the misfortunes that never fail to attend regular govern-

ment, faction seems to be the most destructive, originating in the very nature of man; no country, whether ancient or modern, has been able to escape its baneful effects for any considerable time. Faction accomplished the ruin of Sparta, Thebes, Athens, and several other Grecian states; faction accelerated the fall of Carthage; and Rome was indebted to it for her emperors and their blood-stained catalogue of crimes. If, in more modern times, religious fanaticism has plunged nations into the horrors of interminable war, what has the spirit of party and faction done in France? Europe is yet bleeding at every pore, from its effects in that unhappy and devoted country; but man is still the same, and without paying the least attention to one of the most awful lessons ever afforded to the world, persists in his same mad career of folly and ambition. Like the rest of their European contemporaries, the people of Sicily too are divided into a number of parties, each of which claim the palm of patriotism, and vieing with each other in the most vindictive personal hostility, only think of protracting the people's misery and country's degradation. It is really painful at a moment like the present, when this island has been reduced to such an unexampled state of wretchedness, to see its men of rank and talents incapable of one short effort of virtue, that of uniting and securing their future happiness by giving civil liberty and a constitution to the people. What

a sad proof of degeneracy in the times is it not? to be under the necessity of drawing the following sketch of the different factions that oppose the prosperity of Sicily at this period of its sufferings.

The royal faction is by far the most powerful and united of any; it is composed of every member of Ferdinand's family, who, in addition to their entire detestation of the English, are made to believe that a connexion with us is unpleasing in the sight of Heaven; this curious principle is instilled by the clergy, all the bigotted part of which are unequivocally in the royal party's favor. A number of the most opulent barons have also adhered to the court, many of whom are actuated infinitely more from a want of confidence in us, than attachment to their own sovereign; the Neapolitans, in all about 50,000, form no mean appendage to this faction, and with respect to the whole city of Messina it is unequivocally in the court party. The people of that town seem to retain all the rancour which stimulated them to attack the troops of Richard Cœur de Lion, when he visited the place on his voyage to the Holy Land, in 1194, but whose characteristic gallantry soon brought them and their hypocritical monarch, Tancred, to a sense of duty. Another motive operates still more powerfully with the Messinese; they were formerly in the habit of conducting nearly all the commerce of Sicily, and an extensive trade was carried on

with Calabria, particularly in silk, oil, &c.; the latter has been done away for some years, and, independent of the English factory's having engrossed the greatest portion of its trade to themselves, Palermo, and a few other places, begin to assume a much larger share of commercial importance than they did before our arrival. Reasons like those would doubtless weigh with people of a more liberal mode of thinking than the inhabitants of Messina, and it would be well for our government to take such steps as might be most likely to remove such a well-grounded cause of jealousy. If we admit that self-love and personal interest are the principal stimulants of action in mankind, are there no means by which we can make them subservient to the British interest at Messina? many; particularly our merchants there tell you, that as the population and general riches of the place have increased so amazingly since our arrival, it is only a few factious individuals who are inimical to us; but this is a very mistaken position. When the mercantile interest of a large trading town take the lead against our occupying the island, it is of little importance what the other inhabitants may think. The old enmity between this city and Palermo, together with some very flattering promises recently held out to the former, in the event of our expulsion, have afforded additional means to a certain party of increasing our unpopularity. I have before had occasion to observe,

that one of the most powerful political engines of the Sicilian court, is religion, several instances have also been cited to show in what a variety of ways it continues to be employed against us: to weaken and eventually remove this influence, we have but one resource; and that is catholic emancipation at home. When that desirable and necessary event is accomplished, it will operate like the rod of Moses, not only upon the people of Sicily, but those of every other catholic country in Europe.*

The court has found another very important auxiliary in all the lawyers, whose iniquitous proceedings cannot bear the least examination, and must necessarily be brought to light, still more than they are, if a change for the better should ever be effected in Sicily. The names of those legal characters who are chiefly in the confidence of her Sicilian majesty, have been already mentioned, it should however be observed here, that the whole profession is deeply interested in the present system, and as a proof of the universal detestation in which it is held, I am fully justified in asserting that there is not an individual unconnected with the law in Sicily who would not hail any regulations calculated to suppress the rapacity of

* Who can assert, but that a removal of those religious disabilities which continue to oppress mankind in some countries, might lead to an era of public felicity, unfelt by European states since the [illegible] of christianity?

these people with more real satisfaction, than has been lately supposed; it is actually impossible for language to describe the hatred manifested by every part of the community towards persons of the law, who are indiscriminately designated under the epithet of *Assassini Paglietti.* When their number, above 10,000, aided by that chicanery and low cunning engendered by their peculiar education is considered, this body should be regarded with the utmost precaution, and if no measures are taken for the annihilating of that ruinous combination which they have formed against the public morality and happiness here, all other improvements will, according to the declared opinion of every Sicilian, be of comparatively trifling importance. The patronage of a court, however unpopular, will always attract many other adherents, besides those whom motives of imaginary interest secure on its side; consequently thousands are inclined to favour the views of our enemies here, who are not particularly mentioned, as their opposition would be of no consequence whatever, if our policy was of a more decisive nature than it has hitherto been: for in that case the great body of the people might know what it had to depend upon. At present, it is unfortunately left to determine between what we wish, and that which we intend to do; a situation of the most painful suspense, and more than sufficient to account for the variety of parties into which the Sicilians have formed themselves. In closing this short account of the court party, it should be recollected that it includes

all the other reforms which that species of talent which enables men to accomplish their designs under the most unfavorable circumstances, when actuated by no principle of virtue or decorum, every means, even the most infamous are resorted to by them to insure final success. This is a very important truth, and one that cannot be too deeply impressed on the minds of our ministers in England.

The intermediate space between the court and the people, is occupied by what in our country you call the aristocratic party; it consists of rather a motley group, who possess talents, eloquence, and latent virtues, that if united for the good of their country, instead of being sullied by an accursed love of place and power, would have long since regenerated the people of Sicily. Such a union and effort of virtue seem however, incompatible with human nature, at least in the present state of manners; and the world is thus frequently doomed to see the most brilliant acquirements vitiated and lost to the community, by the predominance of unworthy passions. To form a correct idea of the views and sentiments of these parties known by the title of aristocrats, and who recognize Cassaro, Pantellaria, and Belmonte as their respective chiefs, I cannot do better than remind you of three celebrated associations at home, to which those of Sicily bear a most striking analogy in many respects. But in adding that it would be difficult to ascertain the extent and propriety of the Sicilian aristocrats' views, or whether

they are not principally directed to objects of personal aggrandizement, rather than independent patriotism, do not imagine that I mean to draw the character of those of England, who are doubtless actuated by very different and by far more honorable motives. A Sicilian of uncommon talents, and most minutely acquainted with the real state of his country, made use of the following expressions in a conversation held with him a few days ago: "You are aware that to guard Sicily, will require a great number of troops; you also know in proportion as England possesses ships, so does she find it difficult to raise large armies, yet these are necessary for a power that would aim at conquest, therefore you should begin to think of organizing a military force in this island, but of soldiers, and not cyphers—of free men, not slaves—patriots, and not the rabble; to do this it is necessary to make us feel the advantages of liberty; by removing the cause of our fears, punishing our oppressors, and drying those tears which they make us shed so abundantly at present, by snatching us from that abyss of misery, wretchedness, and ignorance, into which we are plunged; in order to do all this, you will answer, that a great deal of time is necessary, Rome was not built in a day &c., and above all that it would be contrary to your national policy to effect such important changes so soon: recollect however, that the time is most precious; your enemy advances rapidly; she is aided by great talents, and experience; if

once overthrown, how will you recover yourselves? do you imagine in such a case that the Sicilian slaves would continue to adhere to you? they will do every thing to second your wishes, while only in search of a liberator, no matter whom, but if you think the former, believe me you are cruelly deceived. Perhaps you rely on the barons, who now pay their court to you, and are so officious, with their adulating attentions to certain persons; do not, I pray you, encourage so vain and illusory a hope; recollect that those are the large proprietors, they change with the times, and only think of their own interests; recollect that with very few exceptions these men are without patriotism, morality, or virtue, believe them as you would the parasites of Plautus, for like them they are united against the mass of the people: look at their uniform conduct in the Sicilian parliament, where, under the mask of interesting themselves for the nation, they have invariably tried to deceive the vulgar, taking care, under every circumstance, to protect and patronize the lawyers, and thus sacrifice the national interests; look at their conduct in levying the public burthens, which they have made to fall almost entirely on the labouring classes of society, and those who have no tenements; observe their conduct, in usurping all the patronage in the municipal and baronial towns, where they have elected, and continue to elect, the officers of justice, who may be their own creatures, leaving men of merit and talent out of employment;

view them in tyrannizing over their vassals, in their education, manners, and customs; and then you will be thoroughly convinced that you have little or nothing to hope from the attachment or sincerity of such people. How can you possibly rely on the professions of men who have no other wish except that of preserving their unnatural rights and privileges over the people; be assured that at the very first sight of an enemy, and calculating on your past weakness, they would instantly abandon you, aye, even B——a, P——o, B——e himself, and others whom I could name, would be the very first to turn their backs on you; and of this you will one day or other be satisfied." Here is what I really believe to be an exact picture of the barons who compose the aristocratic parties of Sicily; and when I add that the above are the sentiments of one of the best politicians here, you will, I trust, be enabled to draw an important conclusion from them. It would I fear be extremely preposterous to suppose, that the barons of this island will ever consent to such an unlimited sacrifice of their original rights, as may be necessary for the establishment of civil liberty amongst the people. I do not recollect any instance in the history of mankind, wherein persons possessed of power for so long a period, and which had been handed down to them from their ancestors, have made a voluntary present of it to their fellow citizens. Arguing upon this well authenticated fact, and the well known character of those con-

cerned, it is evident that neither the people of Sicily nor the British government have much to expect from the barons; that no solid advantages whether of a civil or political nature will be derived from their separate exertions, I feel the most undecided conviction, and am sure there are many forming a part of their own body liberal enough to agree in the same opinion.

I now proceed to give you some little account of the friends of the people, who are, I believe, in England, honored with the epithet of democrats; here they are, as in other countries, composed of a very small number, and called, without any exception, jacobins (jacobini). As the title of a jacobin and democrat have been applied indiscriminately, since the French Revolution, it is of importance to attempt a short elucidation of what these epithets mean; for I am inclined to think, that they have, for some years, served rather as the watch-word of faction than for any other use. As the first was merely a cant phrase at Paris, I have no hesitation in observing, that the word jacobin, except as a term of reproach, conveys no meaning at all, when applied to persons in other places; but to say that one is a democrat, is not quite so unintelligible: this word, according to all the lexicons extant, whether Greek, Roman, or English, signifies a person who prefers that sort of government in which the sovereign power rests with the people. Although, judging from the facts and experience of ages, I am humbly of opinion, that democracy is

far from being the best form of government, and, furthermore, that a limited monarchy, like that of our own, is infinitely the best, I do not see why those who are called democrats, either here or any where else, should be held up to public scorn, or made the objects of persecution and reproach; if they merely prefer one form of governing nations to another, without imitating the conduct of the French revolutionists, it is an error in judgment, and should not be treated as an act of criminality; this has been exemplified to an excessive degree, both in Sicily and at Naples; where the misfortune of having indulged in any opinions militating against absolute monarchy and passive obedience, has been the cause of death and banishment to hundreds. While I deplore the fate of those martyrs to opinion, it is my duty to vindicate them still more, by informing you how little they have, at all times, deserved persecution. During the time, now above three years, that I have been constantly studying the character of those Sicilians, who are called jacobins and democrats, the sentiments and wishes of the most enthusiastic amongst them, have never exceeded the simple wish of seeing the island's constitution restored to its purity, and the laws faithfully executed. I have never, upon any occasion, met one of these persons who did not express the greatest horror of modern French principles, or who seemed to have the least desire of changing the form of government in Sicily: yet such people are to be imprisoned,

calumniated, and deprived of their property; besides thrown out of all public situations; why! the very stones would be animated into revolutionary feelings by such unmerited sufferings! Indeed, I fear very much, that the most violent political changes, hitherto experienced by nations, owe their origin to the vindictive passions of some men, who are not satisfied except when employed to goad and irritate the feelings of others, who may differ from them on political questions. Had the advice of the democrats, in Naples and Sicily, been followed, the demagogues of France would not have been received with open arms at the former city, in 1799; and Ferdinand the Fourth might have been there to this day in the quiet possession of his throne; whereas, he has lost Naples, probably for ever, fallen beyond conception in the eyes of his subjects, and only holds Sicily by a thread! To conclude, I have found in the democrats and jacobins of this island, not the enemies of their prince and social order, but his zealous, though ineffectual, supporters, the real friends of their country, and of suffering humanity.

With respect to the general popular sentiment in Sicily, as entertained by all parties, from the monarch down to the peasant, some notion of its nature may be formed from what you have seen in the foregoing communications; enjoying the blessings of a free constitution which had been sealed with the blood of so many patriots, and still contending for the liberties of Europe, to

whom could Ferdinand or his people look towards for temporal salvation, with more propriety, when the revolution broke out, than Great Britain? however unmindful of discharging those obligations, by which the friendship of a great nation should be returned, we were always resorted to in the hour of danger; nor was the appeal ever made in vain: and protecting Naples as long as we could, it next devolved upon us to prevent our adopted friend from being hurled from his throne altogether, and to preserve his remaining subjects from the tyranny of French oppression; the latter had conceived a high opinion of our magnanimity, and suffering as they were under the most dreadful bondage, felt satisfied, that when the sons of freemen came to live amongst them and defend their island, they would, in imparting the love of liberty, also communicate a few of its blessings; it was in the anticipation of this advantage that we were dear to the people of Sicily and many others, who have thought highly of our public virtue, in latter times. It was in proportion to benefits experienced by the profered friendship, that we were to be estimated; and long after the royal party had thrown off the mask, returning our assiduity with scorn and insult, the people, faithful to their obligations, continued to think well of us, and attributed our indecision, as well as patient observance of their increased sufferings, to the phlegmatic habits of the northern nations.* There is, how-

* This may appear to be a forced expression, but it would not

ever, a period beyond which forbearance cannot be extended, and having already incurred the hatred of the court, together with many of the barons, the universal public opinion began to change, after Lord William Bentinck's return, in November last: since which, it has undergone a revolution most unfavorable to the English; and although we live like dying men, who are glad to catch at a straw, I am truly sorry to be under the painful necessity of saying, that the national character of England has fallen in the estimation of the Sicilian population, to a point, which, I am almost inclined to believe, precludes the possibility of ever regaining it to the same degree again. An individual who becomes an apostate in political opinion, seldom, if ever, rises into popular favor a second time: but an impression made by the conduct of one state upon another, is of a much more lasting and indelible nature, particularly where the passions of men are stimulated and inflamed like those of Sicily.

With the preceding relation of events, illustrating, in a limited degree, the history of our connection with his Sicilian Majesty and this island, you will have doubtless already determined

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be thought so by those who have conversed with the literati of this country, who draw a most ingenious distinction between the political talents of the respective European powers. We have long been ranked by them amongst what they call "*La gente del norte*," the Russians, Germans, &c., are included with us, in this significant definition.

in your own mind [illegible] our policy towards the royal family and the people of Sicily ought to have been, after the events of 1810; it is, therefore, without wishing to interfere with your decision, that I offer the following observations, in conformity to my former promise, and original design.

Although it is extremely hazardous, in the present day, to broach any new opinion upon political subjects, I am led to think, that it is to that liberal freedom of discussion upon these and various other matters, that our country is chiefly indebted for its wisest and most energetic measures. The suggestions of individuals have not been always attended to, nor would it, perhaps, be either wise or prudent to listen to every *chimerical* speculator that presents himself to the government of a country; yet that projector, whether in politics or mechanism, must be a dunce indeed, whose ideas do not include some little portion of rationality. It is for the more experienced and discriminating to make those ideas useful to the public. It would, however, be well for the interests of humanity, if many of our modern empirics in war and politics were more sparing of their plans; and if the truth was known, I apprehend the loss of many a battle, and even campaign, might be traced to the enthusiastic conceptions of some expectant visionary. We have equally to deplore that wide difference of opinion entertained by men of talents upon the

same points, many of which appear to be incapable of affording the smallest ground of controversy: thus, many writers preach up eternal war as the end of our being, and peculiar interest of Great Britain; this naturally leads to the increase of our naval and military establishments—the extension of our conquests, and acquirement of new colonies, &c.; others, of a less sanguine temper of mind, take the liberty of adopting a doctrine altogether different from the former; they assert, that war is an evil of the greatest magnitude, however necessary it may be on some occasions: many observe that if war is the greatest evil, so is ambition the most serious crime that a nation can be guilty of; and that like the errors of an individual, it invariably brings its own punishment on the possessor; that it has caused the ruin of the greatest states of antiquity, particularly Macedon, Rome, and Carthage; that without enumerating the endless sorrows entailed on modern Europe, by the ambition of their rulers, they are firmly of opinion, that the just equilibrium and happiness of society can only be maintained by limiting our views of power within the bounds of reason and moderation, as the only method of making it either useful or lasting to the people. To these maxims, and a thousand others, which might be cited in support of them, I confess myself a warm proselyte; and though it is far from my intention to depreciate the justice and absolute necessity of the present arduous contest, I have but

too much reason to fear, that it has taught us to forget, in a great measure, those wholesome state maxims by which our future policy ought to be directed, that is to say, if we wish to be thought, and to act like, a truly great nation.

After this short declaration of my political principles, you will have anticipated that I am not amongst the number of those who would dethrone the King of Sicily, imprison the Queen, and finally add this beautiful island to the crown of Great Britain. It is for the infamous policy of Buonaparte to disgrace the history of the nineteenth century, by such violations of law and good faith, a policy which will hand his name, and that of the French nation, down to posterity loaded with those imprecations they so justly merit. A conduct of this kind would place us upon a level with the man, who has, for so many years, been the object of our enmity and abuse; but while there is no necessity of having recourse to usurpation and violence, there are recognized laws of nations, and an infinity of precedents by which our foreign policy, in general, and that towards Sicily, in particular, might have been regulated, very differently to what it has been of late years.

The author of the Historical Survey observes, with great justice, that history is the basis of political wisdom. It is much to be regretted that this important truth, though almost universally acknowledged, has seldom been the guide of states-

men in our time; many of whom, in disregarding its influence, have, as Mr. Leckie anticipates, drawn their conclusions from "the incident of the moment," rather than general principles, deduced from past events. One would think that, in attentively studying the foreign policy of Greece, Rome, and Carthage, the modern statesman, with such numberless and striking examples before him, would never be at any loss in his transactions with other powers, and that in the most difficult emergencies, a reference to the history of those countries would furnish him with a plausible pretext for overcoming the most trying situations. Without entering into a minute inquiry into the conduct of those states towards their allies, it will be sufficient to select a few instances more immediately applicable to the present subject. I cannot, however, refrain from making one remark, which applies equally to all governments, whether ancient or modern; it is, that the most sacred principles of morality have always been made subservient to political rules and maxims of state. In proof of which assertion innumerable facts might be quoted, even from our own history, from the execution of the unfortunate Mary till the seizure of the Spanish frigates, and subsequent attack on Copenhagen; none of which singular events have, I believe, been ever defended on moral principles: indeed, the most celebrated writers have laboured to show, that reasons of state are justified over those of morality in all great national enterprizes.

At all events, Great Britain, in using her power as she has on several occasions, seems only to have followed the example of every other country possessed of a dominating ascendency over the weak. My poor opinions upon any of the foregoing important transactions have nothing to do with the present subject. Posterity has already decided upon one of them; the same impartial judge will, in a few years more, assign the two others the place they deserve in the history of our country.

Admitting the above position, confirmed as it is by experience, how are we to account for those extraordinary contradictions evinced by the policy of some modern governments, which have led them, in many cases of apparent emergency, to violate the established laws of nations; while in others, either a want of energy, or motives of false delicacy, and glaring inattention to the national interests, have suffered the most favourable opportunities of increasing the power and true glory of their country to pass by with the most perfect indifference. It is here wherein we fall infinitely short of that political wisdom which characterized the powers of antiquity, who, with very few exceptions, were so remarkable for decision and promptitude, in seizing the auspicious moment in the course of their political transactions. If we are induced to ascribe the conduct of some politicians to premeditated neglect, in betraying the trust reposed in them, the more indulgent observer is willing to believe that their errors ought gene-

rally to be attributed rather to a want of judgment and penetration, qualities indispensably necessary to those who would govern, but not always possessed by the ministers of a country. Under an impression like this, every man that ventures an opinion upon politics thinks himself fully justified in calling the attention of his superiors to the practice of such measures as may appear to him calculated, not only to avoid the charge of incapacity, but eminently to serve the cause of humanity, and raise themselves in the estimation of all good men.

Resuming my former subject, I have to observe, that although the Carthaginians, on their first visit to this island might have been actuated merely by motives of commercial enterprize, yet as they increased in military strength, so did their ambition; and no sooner did they get quietly settled in the island under the mask of commerce, than the Phœnicians, and other colonists, were supplanted; whilst those who did not choose voluntarily to abandon the fruits of many years industry were irritated into hostility against each other, as in the case of Heraclea, Selinunte, Segesta, and several other places. Any one who reflects upon this dishonourable method of gaining power, cannot help being forcibly struck with the singular affinity it bears to the way in which the Europeans have established themselves in India—another proof that human nature is the same. Continuing to increase her establishments, both civil and mi-

litary, an occasion soon presented itself, which seemed to flatter the senate with the hopes of being shortly in possession of the whole island. Prompted by the embassador of Xerxes, then preparing to invade Greece,* the unfortunate expedition of Hamilcar was undertaken: this, like a recent one of our own, if successful, would have operated as a powerful diversion in favour of the Persian monarch, and, at the same time, have added to the territory of Carthage; but in having totally failed, it produced a directly contrary effect, besides that of holding the Carthaginians up to the merited derision of their neighbours. However, nations seldom, if ever, profit by experience; and the memorable disaster which befel Hamilcar at Himera was scarcely forgotten, when, upon the request of Segesta, the first Hannibal landed another army at Lilibeum, from whence he marched to Selinunte; on the destruction of which, one of the greatest causes of jealousy entertained by the senate was removed. Having achieved one act of success, he proceeded to Himera, and had there another opportunity of revenging the death and disgrace of his grandfather, Hamilcar.

In the subjection of Agrigentum by the same general about three years afterwards, the power of Carthage assumed a very formidable aspect in Sicily; and she little thought of the important consequences to which her efforts against the happi-

* 480 years B. C.

ness of this island were afterwards to lead; for, instead of acquiring any solid advantages, her acquisitions here were only the signal of never-ending and sanguinary warfare, equally inimical to the interests of Carthage as they were ruinous to the prosperity of the Sicilians. The contest with Dionysius the Elder, highly favourable to the Carthaginians at first, like all their other wars, only ended in discomfiture; for what they gained in territory they lost in physical strength, by the ruin of a large army before Syracuse (396 B. C) and the death of another Hamilcar. Vainly confiding in their strength, and with a view of taking advantage of the recent civil broils at Syracuse, the immense armament, under Asdrubal and Hamilcar, was sent against the island, fifty-six years after the former war. Their total defeat by the allied forces of Syracuse and Corinth, under Timoleon, on the banks of the Crimisis, afforded another proof of national folly. The succeeding war, entered into with Agathocles, had no other effect than that of causing great bloodshed, and demonstrating the superior generalship of the Syracusan tyrant.* Subsequent successes, occasioned as they

* I have already alluded to the enterprize of Agathocles during this war. One circumstance that occurred on his leaving the vicinity of Carthage deserves to be noticed, as tending to prove what a prince incurred in those days if guilty of a breach of public faith. Elimne, king of Lybia, having joined him against the Carthaginians, was discovered in a plot with his enemy; upon which, without further ceremony, he caused the traitorous

were by a want of unanimity amongst the people of Sicily, might have completed the triumph of Carthage in this island; but the arrival of Pyrrhus soon put an end to their hopes, and they were, in the course of three years, not only obliged to relinquish all their strong holds, but take refuge in Lilibeum.* But the time was approaching when something more than the power of Syracuse was to be opposed to the fatal ambition of Carthage. The Roman senate, still more eager for power and conquest, embraced the very first occasion that offered, for attacking their future rival; and in the conduct of Appius Claudius towards the Mamertians, while Rome was in a state of profound peace with Carthage, we recognize a proof of the inattention paid to moral obligations when those of a political nature presented a contrary course. As the particulars of this event,

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monarch to be cut to pieces. This is an important fact, as calculated to illustrate the character of the times; nor should it be altogether thrown away upon the moderns.

* Pyrrhus, like his counterpart Charles XII. of Sweden, was a remarkable instance how inefficacious the brightest military talents are, when not blended with prudence or virtue; the possession of which might have secured the sovereignty of all Sicily to the former, had he not taken advantage of his rapid successes against the Carthaginians, to disgust and oppress the people whom his arms had liberated. The life of this prince seems to have been a mixture of victory and disaster, which produced no other effect than that of rendering his subjects wretched, and consigning himself to an ignominious death, which was rather a source of joy than of pity to the people of Epirus.

which gave rise to the first Punic War, are well known to you, I think it will be superfluous to recapitulate them here; they are, however, very well worth the attentive reflection of all those who are fond of historical disquisition, as being the origin of a rivality unequalled in the history of the universe, and which occasioned an endless variety of the most interesting facts on the records of time.

You have, in the foregoing, a short sketch of the policy of Carthage towards this island, and will, no doubt, agree with me in saying, that, from its very commencement, a more selfish or dishonourable one could not be adopted by one nation to another. Taking advantage of their superior strength, this people visited a country hitherto undisturbed by war, and in the course of a few years, actuated by no other motive except the lust of power, converted all into havoc and bloodshed. Who then can reflect on the conduct of the Carthaginians to Sicily, without indulging the liveliest sentiments of indignation? A conduct which, while it served to mark their barbarous character, prepared the world to witness their fall in after-times with the most perfect indifference, if not exultation. The epoch is remote, but the lesson remains as an awful warning to succeeding nations.

If the policy of Carthage was reprehensible, that of Rome towards this unfortunate island was not less so; the same passion which influenced

the former also actuated the latter: it was merely a change of tyrants, to the Sicilians; and the occupation of Messina was the commencement of a new era of misery to them; for, during the first and second Punic wars, this island served both parties as the theatre of their blood and crimes. Being entirely of Mr. Rollin's opinion as to the general character of the Romans, it would only be a waste of time to dwell upon the particular acts of that government while in possession of or contending for the island. The above writer, after exposing its affectation of disinterestedness to the Grecian states, Persia, &c. for the mere purpose of deceiving them, observes—"Upon the whole, we may see from the result, to what the so much boasted moderation of the Romans was intended to lead. Enemies of the liberty of the state, the despisers of kings and kingdoms, considering the whole universe as their prize, they embraced with an insatiable ambition the conquest of the world; plundering, without distinction, every province and country, they drew all people under their despotic yoke; in a word, the only limits they would admit of to their vast projects were those which the seas and the deserts prescribed."*

* It would be extremely difficult for any person in our time to draw a more exact picture of the French nation under Napoleon.

The singular attachment and constancy evinced by the Great Hiero of Syracuse to the Romans has often been the subject of historical commendation: what a striking contrast does it not present, when compared to the ingratitude and perfidy of some

Such being the policy of Rome to the whole world then, I should think no person, at all interested for the happiness of society, or promotion of public virtue, would recommend their example any more than that of their predecessors, the Carthaginians, to be followed by the nations of modern Europe. These, if not already prompted by a love of virtue and an inclination to do good, may easily find precedents for their conduct to other states in that of Sparta, Thebes, and Corinth. With respect to Athens, nothing could be more unjustifiable, or ill judged, than her attack upon Syracuse, undertaken as it was, contrary to the advice of her most able counsellors. The disastrous result of both her expeditions is an additional proof of the temerity by which they were dictated. Wearied with the contemplation of so many wars, originating in the lawless ambition of different rulers, the mind turns with delight to the virtuous exertions of Corinth in favour of public liberty, not only at home, but wherever the call of patriotism required the attendance of her brave troops. The conduct of this little state cannot be too highly applauded, and it ought to be the pride of every country to follow an example so rare and glorious; for, although a confederate of the tyrant Dionysius, and in a state of war with several neighbouring states, they had virtue and

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of his royal successors in this island. Hiero, whom Lucian called the Father of his People, was, perhaps, one of the most perfect characters among the princes of antiquity.

fortitude enough to dispatch their greatest hero for the relief of the suffering Sicilians. I do not think there is a military enterprize of the ancients upon record more entitled to the enthusiastic admiration of posterity than that of Timoleon to Syracuse; to me it seems to have included all that was disinterested and generous in human nature. Sicily, for many years torn with intestine divisions, and now labouring under the sway of a variety of tyrants, implores the assistance of an allied power, who, uninfluenced by all unworthy and selfish considerations, hasten to discharge the sacred duty of giving them freedom. Accompanied with a chosen few, but, what was still more, the approbation of Heaven, and prayers of his country, Timoleon set forward, not like Philip of Macedon, Hannibal of Carthage, or Lucullus of Rome, for the purpose of gratifying guilty ambition, and reducing peaceful states to slavery, but to break the chains of an oppressed people! With such beneficent views, it was no wonder that he surmounted the formidable and numerous difficulties that presented themselves. One is now at a loss which to admire most, the inflexible magnanimity of the Corinthian chief in prosecuting the enterprize, or his unshaken moderation after its execution. If contemporary states were incapable of following the example of Corinth upon this never to be forgotten occasion, it ought not to be a matter of surprize, that the moderns should never have signalized themselves by similar efforts of humanity

and virtue. As the policy of Corinth requires no comment, and has, in succeeding ages, been honoured with the universal suffrage of mankind, I shall only add, that it remains for the ministers of every country, which is desirous of becoming really great, to study the history of Syracuse, and look around for its parallel in the present day.*

I need not tell you that the motto adopted by most European nations since the French revolution, "*La loi du plus fort*," has decided the fate of Sicily ever since the decline of the Roman empire; and that from the incursions of the Goths to the accession of his present Majesty, Ferdinand IV., the natives have been deprived of the blessing said to be inherent in all nations, of electing a monarch of their own choice: yet, as in England and one or two other countries of Europe, there have been laws of the most salutary nature established, at

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* Well might the heralds who preceded the interment of Timoleon proclaim, "The people of Syracuse inter Timoleon the Corinthian, the son of Timodemus, at the expense of two hundred *minæ*: they honour him moreover, through all time, with annual games, to be celebrated with performances in music, horse-racing, and wrestling; as the man who destroyed tyrants, subdued barbarians, repeopled great cities which lay desolate, and restored to the Sicilians their laws and privileges!"† Here is a panegyric worthy of a great man; and how transcendantly does it shine over the long-worded funeral orations, and fulsome epitaphs inscribed to the memory of modern statesmen, more often calculated to gratify feelings of private adulation than to edify posterity.

† Langhorne's Plutarch, v. ii.

different periods of its history, to bind the sovereign and executive power within reasonable limits; many of these you have seen in the letter upon government; and, though never abrogated, they have been shamefully violated in almost every reign save that of Frederic of Arragon, who was a rare instance of a monarch that held the crown in trust for the benefit of his people. When I say that the conduct of several Sicilian kings, if examined by those rules of propriety which, according to Grotius, Puffendorf, Burlemaqui, and Vattel, constitute a legitimate sovereign, would have fallen infinitely short of what it ought to have been, you will, no doubt, very readily believe the assertion; it is, however, now too late to remedy those evils occasioned by the wickedness of great rulers; and as my object is principally directed to the future happiness of this unfortunate people, it is unnecessary to dwell any longer on events, which, however disastrous in their day, are now long past, though not forgotten.*

In submitting for your perusal a few more observations upon the line of conduct we might have adopted towards Sicily and his Sicilian Majesty, with more probability of success than we have hitherto experienced, I am sorry to be under the unpleasant necessity of premising them by remarking, that there is probably no country of modern

* By referring to the above-mentioned luminaries of the law, you will see an ample definition of the mutual obligations which bind the prince and his people.

Europe which has suffered more from various instances of a temporizing policy than ourselves. This defect in our political system is the more aggravating when we reflect, that it arises, in general, from placing a much greater degree of confidence in those we have dealings with, whether enemies or friends, than either their character or conduct can in any manner justify. Some people, particularly foreigners, pretend to have discovered an amazing difference between our military and naval policy, ascribing to the latter a promptness and decision totally unknown to the former. For my own part, I have never been able to discover any material difference; and, with the exception of a Marlborough, a Peterborough, and a Wellesley, on shore, or a Blake and a Nelson upon the water, all seem to have fallen into the great national failings of placing an overweening confidence in the faith of others, by which innumerable trophies, and the most solid advantages, have been lost in the course of the last hundred years of our eventful history; your recollection of which supercedes the necessity of my adding a variety of anecdotes calculated to substantiate an assertion that has been repeatedly made before now.* As the remedy is most simple, let us hope

* Lest the above should be thought a vague opinion, it may not be improper to call your recollection to the events which occurred in Quiberon Bay, the expedition to Holland, at the Dardanelles, Walcheren, Cintra, the apathy of the Spaniards at this moment, and, above all, our treatment from the court of Sicily.

that, in all our future operations of a civil and military nature, the experience of the past will have inculcated a greater confidence in ourselves and less in other people.

I will leave it entirely to your own candour, whether the preceding remarks are not singularly applicable to our conduct in this island, where violations of good faith, and breach of treaties on the one side, seem only to have increased forbearance and generosity on the other; where, in consequence of having adopted a policy inconsistent with the written law of nations, the practice of other states, and acknowledged principles of justice, the British character has been brought into the utmost disrepute; and while endeavouring, doubtless with the best intentions, to create some improvement, matters have not only been made much worse than they were before, but we have incurred the hatred of all parties. This is an important sacrifice of our interests, made, as it has been, upon the most erroneous principle of national moderation, and which was neither justified by the example of any other state, nor the peculiar exigency of the times.

Amongst the public virtues which distinguished the powers of antiquity over those of modern times, their adherence to the faith of treaties, and general sense of the obligations imposed by such solemn contracts, is pre-eminent. How different is it in the present day, when almost every power in Europe seems to vie with the other in setting

its most sacred promises at nought?—In fact, we must have altogether forgotten that there is not another point connected with the law of nations, upon which the interests and happiness of states hinge so completely, as the validity of treaties and their scrupulous execution. It is, I am convinced, to a want of good faith, or open violation of them, that we are indebted for more than two thirds of those calamities which have befallen Europe during the last and present century; nor can we ever hope to re-establish any thing like a permanent balance of power in Europe, until governments once more recognize the necessity and importance of strictly abiding by their mutual engagements. The amazing stress laid upon this subject by all the writers of public law shows how deeply they were impressed with a sense of its magnitude. The venerable Grotius concludes his luminous work by a pious and emphatical exhortation to the princes of Europe, entreating that they should ever keep in mind the sanctity of their promises. Puffendorf, a man to whom the world is equally indebted, repeats the sentiments of his predecessor. Burlemaqui and Vattel, together with many others, also dwell with the utmost energy upon the same topic; but all their efforts have been unequal to the object which they had so beneficently in view:* and their volumes are

* The effect of such general relaxation in the political morality of states has been ruinous and wide-spread, extending to every rank of society, and vitiating, by its example, the great

now consigned to the mouldering shelves of our universities, only to be studied by the civilian and scholar. You will, I hope, excuse this short digression, which I thought requisite, previous to entering more immediately into the case of the Sicilian court, that furnishes so remarkable an instance of the melancholy truth I have asserted.

Treating the grand question, about which so much has been said and written: "How ought the British government to have acted towards that of Sicily, since the signature of the treaty in 1808?" for it is unnecessary to go any further back, upon the broad basis of natural and political law, I now proceed to offer you my humble opinion, which will, I have not the least doubt, be as ineffectual as any other given heretofore. In the first place the exact case between his Sicilian Majesty as the sovereign representative of his people, and his Britannic Majesty, is simply as follows: they enter into a solemn league of future harmony and friendship; the British king, from his superiority of strength and resources, guarantees the security of his friend's throne and remaining dominions: he goes infinitely further, and even allots a considerable portion of the revenues of his kingdom for the purpose of enabling his ally to support his personal dignity, as well as to

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source of domestic happiness. In commerce the total want of good faith, so fatally evinced during late years, has been incalculably injurious to the nations of Europe; but instead of blaming individuals, let us remove the cause.

co-operate in the arduous war in which both are engaged, from the same imperative motives, self preservation; besides sending fleets and armies to defend his territory from the common enemy. Although that part of the treaty (vide Appendix,) which stipulates for the maintenance of a body of troops, squadron of ships, &c. &c. remained completely unfulfilled, the neglect was venial, and consequently overlooked by our indulgent sovereign, as were innumerable other acts of aggression, many of which have been noticed in the foregoing pages. Things being in this state, in March 1810, the tyrant of France concluded a marriage, by which, (oh shame of Europe!) he became son-in-law to the Emperor of Germany, and nearly allied to the royal family of Sicily, upon which an immediate change was observed to take place in the court of Palermo; the communication hitherto kept up with the court of Naples for the purpose of exciting the people against Murat's government, was, from that period carried on with views of a totally opposite nature, which are well known to our ministry, and the insults to the British interests and subjects became daily more outrageous. At length it was universally believed by all Europe, that, notwithstanding the solemn treaty still in full force upon our side, another had been entered into with the common enemy, stipulating no less than the surrender of this island, and the English forces. It is true that, as already noticed, the Marquis of

Circello contradicted the report, but independent of there being very great reason to doubt the general claim to veracity of this minister, I have substantial reasons for advancing that his testimony and vague propositions addressed to my Lord Amherst on the occasion alluded to, were of a most doubtful nature. I say this without pretending to assert that his Sicilian Majesty absolutely authorized the recent engagements, but according to the high legal authorities mentioned before, silence, in similar cases, is equivalent to approbation, and an infinity of subsequent discoveries must convince every unbiassed mind that the report had but too much foundation in truth. For the manner in which the treaty has been fulfilled on the part of the Sicilian government, ever since the period of Buonaparte's marriage, I need only refer you to the foregoing letter. Thus stands the case with respect to ourselves and his Sicilian Majesty, considered personally; therefore, previous to my attempting to illustrate the share which the people of Sicily ought to have had in these transactions, I shall beg leave to offer a remark or two upon the relative position of the respective monarchs.

Puffendorf, with many others, before and after him, in speaking of treaties observes, "If either party break the league, the other is freed, because each article of the league has the force of a condition, &c."* Admitting the validity of this

* See all the writers upon public law from Cicero to Mr. Ward.

universal opinion, it remains for you to judge whether or not we have been long since completely absolved from our engagements with his Sicilian Majesty. As to the legitimate causes of war, the same author, together with all the others who have treated of the subject, is of opinion, that they may be reduced to the following: first, to defend ourselves and properties, against others who design to do us harm, either by assaulting our persons, or taking away, or ruining our estates; *secondly*, To assert our rights *when others who are justly obliged*, refuse to pay them to us; and lastly, To recover satisfaction for damages we have injuriously sustained, and *to force* the *person* who did the injury *to give security for his good behaviour in future.—Law of Nations*, book viii., c. vi., sec. iv.

On reading the above it will immediately occur to you, that in wantonly violating a treaty, the offending party naturally affords a cause of war to the injured; but a little reflection will be sufficient to convince you, that we might have adduced many much more powerful reasons for acting in a hostile manner, and fully justified that hostility in the eyes not only of Europe but of posterity. There were, however, circumstances which in a moral, and even legal sense, forbade a declaration of war: hence you will observe the grand dilemma, in which our ministers have been placed, to commence.

The great body of the Sicilian people, which

constitutes what is called the nation in every country, have had no share whatever in the measures of the court; on the contrary, entertaining the utmost dislike to the French, and, beyond conception, anxious to bear a more active part in our struggles for the lost liberty of Europe, they have been under the distressing and heart-rending necessity of witnessing various fundamental laws of their ancient constitution violated; taxes levied without the consent of parliament; five barons nearly executed, and at length banished without the form of a trial; and to crown all, an agreement made with the enemy of themselves and their faithful allies, to deliver the island up, by which measure they would have been given over to an indiscriminate massacre. Placed in this most cruel situation, with a British military and naval force supporting the authority of the court long after the various discoveries of treason had been made, how were the Sicilians to act? or is it possible that they could regard us in the light of disinterested friends? The condition of this island during these two years past will be more fully illustrated by the following short remark.—If, when our own barons were endeavouring to enforce the constitutional laws of the realm, and finally procure John's signature to Magna Charta, (an event that has alone led to our subsequent greatness) a foreign military force had landed in England under the faith of a treaty of alliance with the whole nation, and suffered him to

trample on the laws with impunity, what would have been the feelings of our countrymen towards the power that thus came to perpetuate our bondage? The same question may be asked in the ship money case during Charles the First's reign, and with still more propriety on the abdication of James II. when we invited William III. over. I am sure that on any one of those memorable occasions the smallest interference with the wishes of the people would have been execrated and violently opposed by every individual in the country. You will perhaps say that there is a very wide difference between the case of England and that of Sicily; this I am ready to admit in many respects, but in that which regards the people's feelings not the smallest whatever.

Having turned all these circumstances over in your mind, and entered more deeply into the subject before us than the most elaborate discussion from my pen could excite, it will, I have no doubt, occur to you, as it has frequently to others, that neither the disturbed situation of Europe, the long established law of nations, our obligations to the court of Sicily, sense of humanity, stipulations of the treaty or motives of self interest, required that we should act in the way we have. Obliged to recognize our error, when to suffer any longer endangered the very lives of the British army and safety of Sicily, the means adopted for obtaining security for ourselves, and satisfying the people, were, in the opinion of most persons

neither marked by sound policy, wisdom, or efficacy. The whig party at home has always been inimical to our interference in the internal government of other countries; this is the result of a deep knowledge of the human character, and a just estimation of those natural unalienable rights which every people ought to enjoy without the molestation of another government. An attention to the above rule with respect to this island, would have proved most highly advantageous to our interests in the Mediterranean, and ere this fixed the destinies of Sicily so as to insure some portion of felicity to the inhabitants, but in meddling with executive arrangements we assumed the whole responsibility on ourselves, and the result is, that we have incurred the hatred both of the court and the people, who, by that very act of ours, had no hesitation in declaring that we were only promoting discord and faction amongst them, merely to forward views of self aggrandizement, a sentiment warmly inculcated by the former partizans. These opinions had an appearance of certainty on the arrival of Lord William Bentinck, whose demands after the numberless representations sent to England about the conduct of our enemies, were comprized under the three following heads: 1st, That 10,000 Sicilian troops should be sent to Spain and Portugal; 2nd, That his Lordship should be appointed to command the Sicilian troops, and be a member of the king's council; 3rd, That British troops should be admitted to

garrison Palermo." These demands, in which the unfortunate and suffering people were intirely overlooked, which in fact conveyed no specific meaning calculated to be in favor of Sicily, operated instantaneously on the minds of every one in the island, not excepting all our own countrymen; but simple as the requests of his Majesty's ministers were, how did the court treat them?—the precipitate return of Lord William was one of the most humiliating circumstances, considered in all its bearings, that ever occured to us in the whole history of our foreign relations, nor can the necessity which induced his Lordship to depart, be sufficiently deplored. If, instead of the above inefficient, and almost useless requisitions, the newly arrived embassador, after having delivered his credentials, had solicited a private audience of his Sicilian Majesty, and being directed in the confidence of friendship to tell him, on the part of his sovereign that the British government determined to be no longer insulted with impunity, had offered his Majesty the choice of two alternatives, *Peace* or *War?* the fate of Sicily was decided at once, in a manner which would have given universal pleasure to both nations, and enabled us shortly to raise somewhat more than 10,000 men in the island, for there is not a man in the whole kingdom who is ignorant of what the sovereign's answer would have been had such a spirited proposition been made. But there were other means of privately gaining Ferdinand over to a just sense

of propriety, and of our avoiding the weight of obloquy that rests upon us now. Suppose, for instance, Lord William had said, "Please your Majesty, the confidence of my master has been shamefully betrayed; he is however of a forgiving disposition, but there are limits of forbearance beyond which, the dearest friends cannot suffer; I have therefore finally to say, that the king, my master, has determined to withdraw his friendship from your Majesty, together with *the subsidy;* his own safety tells him however to retain Messina, Milazzo, Trapani, Syracuse, and Agusta, during the war; your Majesty is therefore left to settle the various points in dispute with your subjects in the best manner you can." Such an address, made by a British general, would have soon drawn his Sicilian Majesty from the indolent pleasures of *La Figuzza*, and it would have been very soon perceived whether Ferdinand had a talent for business or not. Either of the above stratagems, performed in the privacy of the closet, would, I am thoroughly satisfied, have saved his Lordship's return to England, retrieved our lost popularity, and prevented consequences of which no person can have any conception, unless he is endowed with the gift of prophecy. Many of them have been detailed, but who is to know the future result of political errors, when even the most trifling often entail a numberless train of anxieties and troubles? To the foregoing easy and simple propositions for the arrangement of Sicilian affairs,

some will answer that the experiment would have been dangerous, that a civil war and revolution must have inevitably ensued. Those who argue in that way know very little either of the character of the court or the people: the latter willingly placed their fate in our hands; the elevation of one of our embassador's fingers would have enabled him on his first arrival to command the whole kingdom; they were prepared for any thing, it was the critical moment of national feeling which should never be idly thrown away in tardy discussion with the enemy, so that if Lord William Bentinck had only convinced his Sicilian Majesty that the populace were with us, every species of necessary reform would have been effected without our ever appearing on the scene except as the mutual friend of the sovereign and his people; to express my feelings of disappointment and regret at the singular way in which the whole business has been conducted, would lead me into a warmth of discussion unsuited to the epistolary style, and irrelevant to my subject, but another remark of importance ought to be made. Had we found the people of Sicily, like the Iroquois or Patagonians without laws and a constitution in which the duty of the sovereign and subject are amply prescribed, and where the parliament with all its imperfections would have answered every purpose, there indeed the necessity of acting as principals would have been self evident; but in substituting the endless ceremonies

of court intrigue and diplomatic negotiation, for the forms of the constitution, we fell into innumerable errors, and however irreparable these are, let us still hope that a most important lesson will be engraven on the hearts of the future ministers of England.

Bearing in my mind, that whatever I have been induced to say upon the foregoing topic is matter of opinion, although, indeed, sanctioned by that of every rational politician with whom I have had occasion to correspond relative to this island's situation, it would be the height of presumption for any individual to be too peremptory upon such points. It is, therefore, in the same spirit of diffidence, though in self-conviction, that the concluding remark is submitted to your consideration. Uniting ourselves to the court of Naples, nearly twenty years ago, we have, up to the present moment, followed it through disgrace, imprudence, and misfortune; deceived by reiterated promises, irritated by unutterable insults, and calmly witnessing the incessant violation of every article of the treaty which bound it to us, the British ministry have carried their forbearance infinitely beyond what law and reason prescribed. On the other hand, the people of Sicily, warmly attached to us, and inflexibly faithful to their duty, goaded by every species of oppression, suffering from the most corrupt laws, obliged patiently to see the sacred rights of their constitution subverted, and reduced to a state far below the savages of Africa

in point of liberty and happiness, have in vain exhorted Great Britain to liberate them. On our side, actuated by a blind and mistaken attachment to those who continue to betray us, and insensible to the cries of an enslaved population, we have persisted in the same ruinous and indecisive system; till we are loaded with the hatred of one party, the contempt of another, and the derision of all Europe.

It therefore remains for us to expiate the past by redressing the injured and punishing the guilty. Not by our officious meddling in matters of which we are naturally ignorant, the original laws of another country; but by ascertaining whether those laws are equal to the ends of justice, and necessities of the state; and then guaranteeing their prompt and rigid execution. Actuated by so upright and high minded a policy towards an oppressed people, who is there in the universe, (I will not say in Europe,) that would be base and degenerate enough to accuse England of impropriety or selfishness? I do not, on my soul, think there is one, however abandoned. Besides, if such a line is dictated by the great maxim of our holy religion, transmitted to us from heaven, "Do unto others as you would be done by;" if the sacred impulses of virtue and morality regulate our conduct, what worldly opinions are to obstruct the work of benevolence and christian charity? Look into the prophetic page of history, was any nation or government known to suffer

for having obeyed the imperative call of justice and humanity? By relieving the distresses of their fellow creatures, and disseminating happiness? Impossible! The nations, unhappily so few in number, that have been capable of such heroism, invariably acquired additional strength by their glorious efforts; they insured the applause of heaven, and are honored with the blessings of posterity!!!

Completely ignorant of what course the British government mean to pursue in future, relative to this island; but entertaining a positive certainty in my own mind, that those hitherto adopted, and persevered in to the present moment, are entirely inadequate to the security of our mutual interests; I have very little more to add, and apprehend that your patience is already more than exhausted. But one or two observations, intimately connected with the fate of Sicily, seem necessary; in order that a subject upon which I have said so much, should be rendered as explicit as possible. Deeply engaged in the prosecution of a war, on the result of which no person can form the most distant conclusion, but cherishing a hope that whenever the blessings of peace are restored to Europe it will then be in our power to remunerate the people of Sicily for their unmerited sufferings, constancy, and unshaken attachment towards us, by establishing their liberty upon a solid foundation; it is of the utmost importance, that both the ministers and people at home should keep in

mind and seriously reflect upon the tenure by which nearly all the sovereigns of Europe hold their crowns. A reference to modern history will more clearly elucidate this matter; but as applicable to the present subject, I have to observe, that with the exception of our own country, and one or two others, in which the sovereign has been called to govern purely by the people's voice, all the rest derive their power either from right of conquest, or the arbitration of treaties. Without entering into an examination of the way in which the Capets ascended the throne of France, it is hardly necessary to add, that the ambition of Louis XIV. placed Spain and the two Sicilies in the patrimony of the Bourbon family, contrary to the wish of every other power in Europe, so clearly manifested both at Philip's accession, and at the treaty of Utrecht, when he was obliged to cede this island to Victor Amadeus of Savoy. Hence the war of succession between Spain and Austria, by which it once more fell into the power of the former, in whose family it has remained till the present period. While the fleets and armies of England, Spain, and Germany were busily employed in contending for the sovereignty of Sicily, the people had no option except that of yielding to the strongest party; and, bereft of their natural right, only waited, like the beasts of the field, for a master to rule over them.* Now if the respective

* It is not, I believe, very generally known, that the crown

powers of Europe should ever again recognise the real interests of mankind, and, convinced of the ruin attendant on a perpetual state of war with each other, turn their thoughts to the establishment of an equitable balance of power in Europe, who will maintain, that its future tranquillity would depend upon Spain and the two Sicilies remaining in the same family; more particularly, should the legitimate sovereign of France be restored, an event by no means improbable. If,

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of Sicily was offered to Henry III. of England; such is, however, the fact! and had not that unhappy monarch been naturally imbecile, and on such bad terms with his subjects, this island might have have now been an appendage to the British Empire, and served us in lieu of some of our transatlantic possesions. The offer was made in 1266, by Pope Innocent IV., who had previously excommunicated Manfred, for his opposition to the see of Rome. It was first proposed that Henry's brother Richard, Count of Cornwall, should undertake the conquest of Sicily; the offer was then transferred to the monarch himself, who nominated Edmond, his second son, to the new kingdom. He could not, however, succeed in prevailing on the parliament to advance the necessary sums: and although urged in the most pressing manner by Alexander IV., successor to Innocent, the scheme of our coming here was abandoned in favour of France; when Charles of Anjou, brother to Louis VIII., soon destroyed his rival, and ascended the throne.

The whole of this curious circumstance is related at large in Bourigné's History, who cites several authorities, and amongst others, Rapin, Mathew Paris, &c. The marriage of Jane, daughter of Henry II., and sister to Richard Cœur de Lion, to William the Good, in 1172, was the foundation of our claim upon the crown of Sicily. What would not Buonaparte accomplish on the authority of an infinitely more futile pretext?

however, on a pacification taking place it is found expedient to keep this island attached to the crown of Naples, although well known to be totally in opposition to the people's wishes, then will it not be absolutely necessary to secure the inhabitants from further oppression; and so to regulate the island's future government that they may be enabled to rise out of their present state of torpid inactivity? Should the high contracting powers, actuated by a more rare and liberal policy, convert Sicily into an independent sovereignty, which I know to be the universal wish of the people, cannot Ferdinand the Fourth's family be amply indemnified with several adjacent islands, or one or two of the imperial fiefs, &c.? If after the peace of Utrecht it was thought necessary to give this island a separate sovereign, with how much more reason would a similar arrangement be effected after every trace of confidence and attachment has been so effectually destroyed between the actual monarch and his subjects, and when a great proof of magnanimity might be evinced by all the European sovereigns in suffering the Sicilians to have some little share in electing a monarch of their own choice. In fact, I cannot see it possible, anticipating, as I do, the restoration of the balance of power, and expulsion of those mushroom sovereigns raised by Buonaparte's matchless audacity, and other causes, that his Sicilian Majesty would attach any great importance to retaining Sicily, after all that has oc-

curred during late years. If he did, reasons of state and motives of humanity ought to overrule him. Upon whom the government of this island devolves, in the event of a change like that which I have suggested, is another consideration: that the choice should fall upon a prince that had already governed a smaller state; that he should be a catholic, and totally unconnected with any of the great sovereigns of Europe, is my humble opinion. It would be preposterous were I to detain you upon the extent and variety of my own thoughts as to the ulterior arrangements that might be calculated to insure the independence of Sicily, and have only to add, that, with the establishment of a good constitution, and the united guarantee of those powers from whom its felicity had sprung, this island would, within a very short period, exhibit to the world a gratifying scene of national glory and happiness, instead of what it does now, one of the utmost poverty and wretchedness.

Having thus endeavoured to discharge my duty to the people of Sicily no less than my own country, I take my leave of the former. The task prescribed was by no means an easy one, yet might have been infinitely better performed. It was however impossible for any person to have undertaken it with a more ardent desire of doing good: a warmth of expression sometimes approaching to asperity may have escaped me; but when you reflect on the causes which gave rise to that, and my motives, those of a desire to relieve a suf-

fering people, and establish truth on a basis of solidity, it is hoped that the severity of criticism will be assuaged. May the inhabitants of this island be restored to the exercise of their civil and political rights, may the exalted religion of Christ cease to be an instrument of oppression in the hands of a fanatical priesthood, and brought back to its purity, teach them in what true morality and virtue consist; finally may they never forget that if the prosperity of a state depends on the rigid observance of good laws, so is individual happiness founded alone upon the practice of *morality*, religion, and virtue!

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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